

Teachings 2010 to 2000 Eckhart-Tolle-Teaching Compilation Part 4 of 8

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 34:23)

Ability that comes from the non-personal realm to be integrated into the personal, and they just can't do it. It's totally misperceived, just as the world misperceives it, and then they believe themselves to be very special. And there comes a huge conflict between power that comes out of the formless and the limited person that misinterprets it and claims something out of that.

And the magic that comes from the formless realm into your life is what, when you look at our civilization, it seems to be gone completely because the civilization is almost totally not sacred. It is profane. It is a dreary, burdensome structure that humans have created.

When you look at the mainstream civilization, and so many humans, no matter what country you go to, they seem to be tired. They are weary. There's a weariness that they carry, and the civilization is grinding them down.

Another day of dreary activity, of pointless running around, and even those who are still running around, they know deep down it's pointless. What is the point? And you ask the big executives in companies, where are you going?

Why are you running around like mad? And they can't give you an answer except that, well, we are expanding. The organization is expanding.

We are swallowing up other organizations, and that's our reason for being, is to grow, to get bigger. It's to accumulate more, and so it's all, this is why we are, and it's totally meaningless activity. And so there are many reasons why the entire civilization is reaching a point of collapse, and one is that the humans who are still sustaining it they can't carry the burden of their self-created structures anymore, the over-complicated world, absurd complexity for the sake of complexity that they have created, and they cannot carry their own burden of their own creation anymore, mind-created, just a reflection of their state of consciousness in which there is no gap in the stream of one form after another, one thought after another. The voice in the head that never stops speaking becomes a civilization that is obsessed with form, that is obsessed with things, and therefore knows nothing of that which you could say is the most important dimension of human existence, the sacred, the stillness, the formless, the divine, all these have become meaningless in our civilization, and yet many humans are beginning to realize what's happening, and so there is in many a search for something else, and that number of humans is growing every day, and that's the beauty of it. So, each one of us here is part of the transformation of consciousness that's happening on the planet. It's not going to happen, it is happening.

If it were not happening, you could not even sit here. It would be intolerable to sit here. And yet, there may be something in you that's the old consciousness that doesn't want to be here.

You may occasionally feel that arises. There's something that doesn't even understand what is being said, that hears only the sound of the words, and says it can't go to where the words point, so you get stuck with the form, the sound, stuck with the thought, and says presence, stillness, stillness. Well, you haven't actually explained what you mean by stillness.

So this is a good example where the word is only the pointer, and then you have to jump off the word. Stillness points to stillness. It's not something to be believed in.

And the stillness, of course, is already in you. It is not something that we need to create here. We need to bring about by doing the right things, and then eventually we'll become still.

Follow a certain course of a recipe. If you do A, B, C, and D, you will finally become still. That's very seductive.

But you have given yourself something to do before you can be still, which means before you can find yourself and be yourself. That is the problem of every method, every spiritual method. Not that I would outright condemn all methods, but the danger with any method is that it gives you time.

It says, OK, you will arrive and find yourself. Why not find yourself already? Why create something between yourself and yourself?

So the stillness that is already at this moment in you fully, the stillness out of which the thoughts come. Every thought comes out and then goes back in. Sense perceptions get you a little closer to it.

When you perceive, and do not label it, whatever you perceive, you just let it be, then there is the perception, the form, and there is the, one could almost say, this is a limited analogy, no analogies are that great, but you could say there is the canvas on which the perception is painted. There is a background of spacious stillness. That's yourself.

That's the consciousness that you are, formless. Not the conditioned consciousness that is the forms in your mind, thoughts. They are there too.

But simply being able to sense that which underlies whatever you perceive, or think, or feel. Gurdjieff put it, the Russian teacher who lived at the beginning of the 20th century, put it like he called it self-remembrance. And of course that can be misinterpreted as if you had to think about, okay, let me remember who I am.

My name is such and such. No. He meant to remember, not even to remember, words are never right, to know the knower.

To know who knows this. Who, in a dream, let's say you dream, and then you wake up and say it was only a dream, it was unreal. Of course it wasn't totally unreal because something within the forms that arose in the dream must have been there to enable these forms to exist.

There must have been a consciousness in which this dream unfolded. And so, in other words, there must have been a dreamer of the dream as the consciousness in which it happened. And that is the timeless and formless dimension without which forms would not exist.

And so our normal existence is very much like a dream because just like a dream everything dissolves fairly quickly. Every situation, everything is... And even the seemingly solid reality that surrounds us is not really that solid.

First of all, there's nothing solid. It just appears solid. It's just energy fields in motion.

And they're not going to remain in that form for very long. If you could look more deeply you could see everything is already dissolving. It's temporary.

It comes into form and dissolves. The bodies that are sitting here are already dissolving. Even this table.

If we look in 200 years it will still look more or less the same. But if we could speed up on camera what happens to this room over a period of 3,000 years which is very little on a global scale then we would see that even all seemingly solid objects are crumbling. Within one minute you would see everything becoming dust and then disappearing.

And it would be a shocking and liberating thing to watch a film like that that shows you what is actually happening to the seemingly solid world around you. And deep down it's a liberating thing when you see how short-lived every form is. Because what is it in you that sees that?

The short-lived nature of all forms and you witness that. That is the aware presence. From the stillness you see that.

And actually you become more still the more you see how short-lived every form is. And you don't run away from that fact. You just stay with it.

Let's see how important it is to face death in your life which is everywhere. Which is what our civilization is trying to hide continuously. There is no death.

Don't ever look at a dead body because it just isn't done. So there are people who have never seen a dead body. And certainly if it's not a close relative you would not be able to

see a dead body.

Because the civilization needs to hide death. Because it's the most threatening thing to somebody who is totally identified with the world of form. Death is the most dreadful thing and you must not think about it or talk about it.

And so whenever you are faced with death there is and even just watching it and when the table dissolves that's death too. If you saw it over a period of 3000 years and saw it crumbling within a minute the entire room and everything in it goes or you would see a human being being born. Somebody showed me a clip from an ad from some country.

It takes one minute. A baby is coming out of the womb and shoots out like a cannonball into the sky and screams all the time. But as the baby travels up into the sky it already begins to grow and grows and goes higher and higher and finally reaches full maturity and then starts going downhill and is still screaming.

And the closer and then becoming an old man as he approaches the ground hair is falling out and finally the last scream and he lands in the grave. And it says underneath life is short. Now whether the people who made that film knew that they were making a spiritual film I don't know.

I think they were selling beer or something like that. But that is deeply spiritual when you see how quickly everything dissolves and you don't run away from that fact. And this that again what I mentioned yesterday the Old Testament prophet who said vanity of vanities all is vanity to see that is liberating.

Because this now if everything were permanent it's the same as saying if the entire world were blue there would be no blue because you couldn't differentiate it. The color blue wouldn't exist. Now if everything were impermanent you wouldn't even know it because you only know it if there's something that's different.

So I just give you this to consider and not to think about to consider that there's something in you that recognizes the impermanent nature of all life forms and that is the formless. And the more you realize the impermanence of all forms the more the form you are aware of the formless in yourself. But you and the formless are ultimately one so when I say you are aware of the formless we are already making a little mistake that's created by language.

What it really is that you are more fully yourself. You are more aware of yourself not as two but as one. You become more self-aware.

Awareness becomes aware of itself. And there was a question here written by somebody who probably doesn't like public speaking. Later we may have some more questions.

In the now sometimes I'm aware of expanding. What is this? It seems to be awareness

itself.

If I am aware of awareness duality, which am I? Good question. I am aware this is what it seems like when we talk about it.

But that's not how it is. It's only when we put it into language we formulate a sentence which has a subject and an object. But really when you become aware of awareness which really is the secret to a balanced human life to become aware of awareness and then also the forms.

But what does that mean? Who is becoming aware of awareness? The language that we use here creates the illusion of duality.

So it would be much better if we rephrase that and we say the awareness that I am becomes aware of itself. No duality. The awareness that is the essence of who I am becomes aware of itself.

And that is a miraculous beautiful, incredible thing. What traditionally has been called self-realization. Becoming aware.

Awareness becoming aware of itself. As simple as this. But every word reduces it again to something that is far greater.

And of course there is a sense of expansion because you are no longer trapped as the questioner mentions expanding. You are no longer trapped. Your consciousness is no longer trapped in the form.

That's the incarnation. The incarnation of consciousness into form and the realization of consciousness as the formless. And so some spiritual traditions speak of reincarnating many times.

And you say you reincarnate again and again until you wake up, until you realize who you are beyond form. And that is true. You are born again and again.

But I want to make it not as something that I want you to believe in, but to make it true in your experience. And to make it true in your experience, all you need to look at is today. How you reincarnate today.

Now how does that happen? How do I reincarnate today? I thought it just happens once in a lifetime.

You know the sticker that the born again Christians have on their cars says born again Christians. And the Buddhists have on their car born again and again and again. How do you reincarnate today?

And how many times do you reincarnate today? Every time you lose yourself in a

thought or an emotion or something that happens out there, which also of course you experience as thought and emotion. Let's say you lose yourself in a situation that says this is important, you must deal with this.

Okay, what's going on here? And then you lose yourself in the reactive pattern and in the mental interpretation or this is awful, you must do something about it. Whatever it is, you identify with a form.

Every thought that arises in your mind that grips you completely, there's a sense of self in it. It's unconscious of course. Your sense of self means your sense of identity gets mixed up with the form of that thought or the emotion.

And so you're completely incarnated in the form that arises in your life. And so humans go through life not knowing, not realizing that every day they reincarnate many times. They lose themselves continuously in forms.

They react to the forms around them. They're totally in the reaction. There is not an awareness in the background.

Of, okay, this is what's going on. So there's no space, there's only form. There's no stillness, there's only noise.

And that means being compulsively reincarnate, reincarnating every day many times. And even while you sit alone in your room and you start thinking about, oh, oh, if you were talking out loud the voice in your head that you identify with, everybody would recognize it as insane. But, oh, but then on the other hand, I don't know, then what if I do that, then you, I wonder what happens if I go, oh, that would be dreadful if that happens.

I just hope that the, oh, no, I hadn't thought of that before. And you reincarnate continuously into some new thought form. And so, of course, that's why Buddhists talk about coming to the end of reincarnation simply means not losing yourself in form again and again and again.

And it doesn't mean you reject all forms. Some spiritual traditions go a little bit far in their attempt to find the formless dimension. They say, don't even look at anything beautiful because it's not going to be around for very long.

It's all dissolving already. Don't even look at the flower. Certainly don't, they tell the monks, never look at a beautiful woman.

You must not look. And so they go, hmm. laughter Because you would reincarnate in many ways.

You lose yourself in the attraction and that's dangerous. So a monk mustn't even, he can't hand a woman something because it's dangerous. He has to, he puts it on the table

and then she picks it up because otherwise there could be some indirect contact.

Now, the idea behind it may be a good one, that you mustn't lose yourself in form. And yet, to reject the world of form is perhaps again losing balance again in the other direction. All beauty is dust.

Because whatever I look upon is already dissolving. The flower that looks beautiful today, tomorrow will be gone with it. And so, in some traditions, the entire world of form is rejected completely.

Now, occasionally, that seems to work. Mostly it doesn't. But here and there, some people realize this even within that tradition.

But that probably doesn't have anything to do with the traditions. They would have realized even if they were sitting in an office. They were ready.

So, it is always problematic if that which is a natural process of disidentification is forced into an artificially created structure. It may work. It works if there is a human being there who embodies the two dimensions, who embodies the awakened state.

Then it can work. In many cases, there is no human being. There is only the tradition.

And then, usually, it doesn't get you there. So, the form... Not rejecting forms outright.

I work with to see that in every form, something is hiding that is one with the essence of who you are. That is not something you can think about. It is if you...

Anything that you look upon and you are still enough to listen to, the bird, whatever it may be. Anything that you can be with in stillness. So that you sense yourself as the still space in which that object or that being is perceived.

Then you sense that that essence that you sense yourself to be is also there in that being. And even in inanimate objects. Even a table has being, has presence.

Some people need to take acid for the first time to realize that the table is alive too. But this is not what I recommend here. All you need to be is present with it and truly be alert and still and then look.

The moment you call it table you are under the illusion that now you know what it is. You don't know at all. It remains totally unknown and mysterious.

Just because you put a label on it doesn't mean now you know. You just have a thought in your head or a sound that comes out of your mouth and you say that's what it is. And then you cannot go deeper into it because you get stuck at the label.

You hit the label and then you are stuck. Oh, that's a table. Okay.

What's the next thing? You never can go deeper into anything. You only hit one label after another.

Okay. And therefore it's always a search. Because you only hit the surface of things you always then immediately the mind says okay I've done that.

I know what that is. Where's the next thing? There's this continuous looking for the next thing because you can never stay with one thing where the depth that is in everything reveals itself to you.

And that's the restlessness of our civilization that always asks what's next? What's next? And you already see even in relatively young children these days that continuous need for the new stimulus they can't sit still for a moment.

Okay. Because they are used they are addicted to the next thing. Some new mental stimulus because they live in a civilization that is totally only on the surface of things.

Lacking completely in depth. So now you can bring in depth even into your perceptions of things. Perception is much closer to the unmanifested or to being than thought.

Thought is far removed. It's an abstract but you get for many people to become present when they realize oh I'm lost. I'm lost in some problem some world of problems.

Where's the problem now? And they wake up. And the first thing they notice is sense perceptions around them.

They hadn't been aware of that at all because all their attention was in the thoughts. And suddenly they look at the floor. The hand.

The table. The light. And in the looking there's a stillness.

In fact the strange thing is you cannot even look at anything without stillness because even the person who labels things compulsively which is almost everybody there's always a moment when they first let's just talk for a moment about the visual sense but it includes all sense perceptions. There's always a first moment when you first look at something a tree a flower, a table anything there is a one second or so in which there is stillness. And then the mind interprets it or labels it.

But if you can catch yourself when you first look at something there is a brief moment of non-labeling otherwise you wouldn't even see it. And then it recedes almost one could say the sense perception immediately loses its sharpness and aliveness because after one or two seconds the mental label replaces the aliveness that was there. Dead.

And then you look at the next thing or you listen to a bird and there's a moment of pure listening. And then after two seconds the mind says something. Oh, that must be a black bird.

Or what's the name of... Gone. Or whatever the mind says about it.

So if you can catch yourself whenever something new enters your awareness, whether it's auditory or visual, tactile smelling, tasting even, relatively undeveloped senses for contemporary humans there you can be there and be conscious of that first moment when there's no labeling. There's the stillness and the alertness. And if you become conscious of that you may find that it becomes longer.

You don't need to automatically label it. And so the stillness that is the background to sense perceptions becomes faster. It's always fast but you didn't know it.

And so that is how another way in which the stillness in you expands. So to speak. Everything is so to speak about stillness.

The stillness in you expands. And then more and more you move about your life not just when you are passive, passively perceiving, but also bringing it into activity that state of consciousness so to speak that is stillness flows also into what you do. So that you notice you can actually do things better with if they are done in a state of still presence than if you are thinking what you want to achieve through this movement where you want to get to in the next moment.

[Speaker 2] (34:23 - 34:23)

No.

[Speaker 1] (34:23 - 51:22)

You're just present with so there's a stillness to what you perceive and there's a stillness that flows into the action and the action may be simple. Walking across the room. Opening a window.

Turning on the tap. Feeling the water. Listening to the water.

Looking out of the window. In the morning you open the curtains. And why?

It's simply a deep seated habit to immediately call this day something and say oh no, not another grey day. No, just let it be. And then there's immediately a depth to everything that wasn't there when you immediately put a label on it.

So you stay with things a little longer and that depth is your own depth and the depth there. They are really one. The things of the world then are no longer experienced just as a surface phenomenon but as alive.

Because the depth is the aliveness also in you. And so this is the shift that is happening to you is that you bring in this so called new consciousness into everyday situations. And you break the continuity of your story.

Then intelligence comes in more and more. Also love. Because the only way love can come into your life is through space.

Not through form. Love has no form. And again in the egoic state love gets entangled in form so you think you need only this form you love.

Not realizing that true love is the recognition of the formless in the other. Which is the recognition of yourself in the other. And that is inseparable from looking upon the other in stillness.

Without a form arising and saying this is who she is or what she is. And if form still arises in your mind, recognize it's only a thought. It's not who that human being is.

And then what beauty if you can recognize the formless in form. First you can recognize it in natural things very easily, much more easily. Because natural things are less challenging than humans.

Humans are were natural once. But now they have become whatever. The world of nature you approach first of all and relate through stillness and presence more and more.

And then gradually you bring it into human relationships. Easy with humans you meet for the first time. Let them be.

And as you're listening vital to be able to listen to another human. It doesn't mean that the words all your attention is on the words when you listen. We're only listening almost as an analogy.

There is a field of attention, of still attention that flows out towards that human being. One could say, you give him or her space. And then that person may be speaking, words arise in the space.

But you are there as the spaciousness that allows words to come. You are there as a field of aware presence. And then words may come out of your mouth suddenly.

And that's very different from so called normal human interaction that is all completely mind dominated. To be still with another human being while you listen and sense yourself as the awareness while you listen. So some of your attention is on the words and some of your attention is now with challenging humans get into your body so that you can be present with your entire energy field, every cell of the body is present as you listen.

Because humans can be very challenging. They want, because they are dominated by mind, they want you to contribute to their mental structures. The drama, whatever it is.

Their pain body may be active. Everybody here probably knows about pain body, which

is another way of identifying with form. The old emotion that arises, slight trigger, triggers pain body, a pain body episode, pain body being the old stored up emotion from the past, human suffering, human pain, that hasn't gone away, that is partly personal and partly collective, humanity.

Ultimately, in the larger sense, it's all just human pain. It's not ultimately personal at all. And that is a little entity, energetic entity that lives in you, sometimes dormant, and sometimes active.

And sometimes half dormant, half asleep, with one eye open, waiting for an opportunity, just for a trigger, so that it can come up. And the trigger could be a remark your partner makes. Are you accusing me of being a little...

No, I didn't say that. Yes, you did! And then we start.

The drama, that awakens the partner's pain body, and that's supposed to happen. They feed each other. You totally reincarnate into old pain.

You live it. It lives through you. Not knowing that you are going through another reincarnation.

And you may be a Buddhist and having thoughts in your head that you want to arrive at the end of the cycle of reincarnations and that some abstract entity is in your mind. And you don't know that while you are fighting with your wife, you are reincarnating at this very moment. I must get back to my meditation.

I don't meditate an hour a day. I'll have to reincarnate again and again and again, while you're doing it now. Oh.

So this is one of the most frequent ways in which people reincarnate, is into the old emotion that wants to feed on the experience of more pain. And it pretends to be you. You identify with it.

It occupies your entire space. And you feed on the other person's reaction. And you love it.

When I say you, I mean the pain body. At that moment there is a mistaking the pain body for who you are. That's reincarnation.

And then finally it subsides. And then the next episode will be in a week's time, just like the soap operas. Or it will feed on your mind.

If you have no partner, it will feed on your thinking. How dreadful my life is. What he did to me, she did to me, they did to me.

The world, politicians, people, whatever the mind can think of that's a negative thought,

the pain body loves it. The pain body is the addiction to negativity that humans carry. And it's a little entity, an energy form.

And all that is required is for you to see, to recognize it. Then you don't reincarnate into it anymore. And even if you were reincarnated, it is possible in the middle of negative thinking or in the middle of a drama with your spouse to suddenly know what's happening.

That means some of your consciousness has stepped out of the form and is there as pure awareness. Before it was totally trapped in the form. And then when you suddenly see what's happening, that means what's happened there, some consciousness has stepped out of the incarnation and is there as pure consciousness watching.

And there you are, the angry entity screaming. Oh, look at that. And then it can't go on for that much longer because when there's awareness there, presence, which is simply the still watcher, then it can't very well renew itself much longer because it needs your unawareness, it needs your complete identification with it to really renew itself.

So then it quickly subsides. It goes, hmm. Well, that was good at least.

I woke up in the middle of it. Sometimes you wake up afterwards. There it was.

Too late. But it's not really too late because at least I'm awake now. Next time maybe I can catch it a little earlier.

And then next time it comes. There it is. And you can sometimes see how a little event can be used as an excuse by the pain body.

Just a tiny thing going wrong. Somebody slams the door on your face and there's a reaction far greater than the relatively insignificant event. And that's because the pain body was waiting for something.

So shining the light of attention, of consciousness on it is all that's needed. Then you don't reincarnate completely into it every time and renew the old cycle. It's always the same.

Always the same. If you're not present, in 30 years' time you'll still have the same episodes with your wife or husband. Or it may be a new wife and a new husband, but it'll be the same.

And the strange thing is you look for somebody saying you get to divorce finally. I can't live with this pain body anymore. I mean the one that I live with.

You still have your own. And so you get divorced and say, okay, now my next husband or wife I'm going to choose somebody who doesn't have a pain body, who's conscious. And then you meet somebody who looks conscious.

They've done spiritual work for 25 years. And then you start living together and within about four weeks you will encounter an aspect to that person that wasn't supposed to be there. So that's the challenge of the pain body.

Whether you are in a relationship or not it'll be there. Relationships are a good opportunity because that's the favorite playground of pain body renewal. But if the pain body doesn't have the relationship, it'll just use your mind.

That works too. So watch for that because there's a momentum there that's very strong because it's been there's such a huge amount of human pain, collective human pain on this planet built up over many, many thousands of years. And really, all that your pain body is, or it looks personal, it's really human pain.

Although something in your so-called personal life may have added to it, but really it is basically impersonal. Just as the movement of thought is basically impersonal. The emotions are human emotions.

The thoughts are all thoughts that are being thought by the collective human mind. And people think, that's me. But it is impersonal.

It's just that when you identify it, it gives the illusion of being personal, of being a person there. You are being thought by the collective mind. And so well, where is the personal then?

Well, the strange thing is that stillness isn't personal either. Presence, stillness is not personal. And yet it is essentially the beingness that you are.

But it's not personal. Personal means a little thing that there's me and the others. So ultimately there's nothing personal.

Neither the unconsciousness that identifies with forms nor when the consciousness arises is not personal either. And yet the essence of who you are, the I am, that is nothing to do with person. But it gets mixed up with the personal.

The forms that the person identifies with, that make up the person. As you know, person, the word comes from Latin. It means persona, the mask that you wear.

And these are the roles that you play when you interact with other humans. As long as you're identified with mind and emotion. You play the roles that are personal.

You play the script in your mind. The conditioning of your mind. Again and again and again.

Born again and again and again. Until you've had enough. And then you're fed up with the suffering that that entails.

[Speaker 6] (51:24 - 51:25)

Ah!

[Speaker 1] (51:25 - 58:27)

And the readiness comes to step out of that. That's the end of reincarnation. Before we have a few questions, there may not be any questions left.

That would be good too. Hello. Can you listen to the sound of the bell at the same time as you're aware of the awareness that is listening?

In other words, aware of yourself as the presence in which the sound happens. And then all that's left is spaciousness. Presence.

Form and formless. So even while you listen to the form, which is the sound, follow the sound as it slowly dies down into formlessness. That is death too.

When the sound slowly dies down, when I ring this bell again, after the Royal Air Force has passed, follow the sound until it disappears. That means the sound dies. Death means a form is dissolving.

Dissolves. And then what's left is formless. Consciousness.

You can do the same with your breath. That's an old meditation method. The simplest one, one of the simplest, doesn't really give you time to observe your breath.

The Buddha recommended that. It's perhaps the most direct meditation method because it doesn't give you time. Unless the meditator comes in as a conceptual identity and says, I must get better at observing my breath.

When you observe how your breath moves out, the end of the out-breath is also a little death. And there's a moment of stillness. Any ending is helpful in that way.

Because any ending is the ending of any form. And it's always some kind of death. When you accept it fully, it's an opening into the formless.

Even the ending of our little retreat can be like that. Because that too is a form. And you could say, oh, what a pity.

This form is dissolving. And you want to hang on to the form. A recipe for unhappiness.

Not realizing that the very reason why this gathering is meaningful is that it takes you beyond form. So the more you welcome all the endings in your life, goodbye, form is going. The more the formless is there in your life.

The egoic entity works the opposite way. It hates. It wants to think, oh no, I want to keep

this.

But it's going, going, gone. Everything. If you're old enough that you can see the death of this physical form approaching, that can be very beautiful too.

To feel, to accept that, but not as a thought. Oh, I'm going to die soon. No, let it push you into being present.

Just that. If any questions arise, please ask. One person there.

I think the microphone will travel to you.

[Speaker 3] (58:33 - 58:57)

You use a lot of humor in your, a lot of laughter in your presentation, and there appears to be a lot of laughter in you. I have this sense that once the humorous thing is said and the laughter begins that that too is a porthole into presence. Can you speak about that?

[Speaker 1] (59:01 - 1:07:10)

The humor arises spontaneously when you look at, really whenever this humor arises, we are looking at the world of form and see that the normal existence, which is the identification with form, is a form of madness. And when you see it in your own life, the seeing is free. In that moment of freedom from that old conditioned form, there is the spontaneous relaxation, and that produces the laughter.

So it's enormously liberating. The more you laugh at the world of form, not in a malicious way, but in a free way to see the forms do not, they pretend, all the forms pretend that they are deadly serious. The world wants to be taken really, every situation says, I'm so serious.

And if you have no inauspiciousness, then indeed every situation is dreadfully serious. And so the absolute seriousness of the world of form disappears when you are rooted in the formless, and that means laughter arises more frequently, even in relatively unlikely situations, and it does not mean that you have no empathy or compassion. It's sometimes when I used to see people individually, they would come to me and usually they begin by telling their story.

At that time I just let them, okay, tell me the story, and sometimes while they were telling, and sometimes it was a very unhappy story, very unhappy. And sometimes while I was listening, there was a smile on my face, and it just, I don't know how it got there. And sometimes the people who were telling suddenly stopped and said, what are you smiling about?

Are you laughing at me? No, and then I found it hard to explain. There was a time when I didn't have really many words to explain.

So I found it hard to explain why the smile was there, not smiling at anything they said, smiling because I recognized both within myself and within them, underneath the story, I recognized the dimension in which that story is relatively meaningless. I recognized that underneath the story you are absolutely fine. I recognized the dimension in you where you are, was never touched by the unhappy story who you are.

And because I recognized that, the smile came. And so, but quite a few times people got angry because they thought I was smiling at their story or at them. It wasn't taken all that seriously anymore.

Just as my own story lost its seriousness, it continued in some way, playing itself out, but it wasn't serious business anymore. It doesn't mean you don't honor the world of form. It doesn't mean that you have become callous towards things.

No, not at all. There is you still here as this form identity, you still carry a form also. So you can empathize with the suffering that arises in anyone who is totally identified with form.

And yet that is one aspect of compassion, that you know full well what it means to be trapped in form is suffering. And I've been through it. I know the suffering.

So there's the empathy on the level of form of suffering, but there's also the recognition of that which is already beyond suffering in me, in you. It's one. And there come the two aspects of compassion.

On the one hand, we share being trapped in this form, seemingly. On the other hand, we also share the timeless and formless dimension of existence, where we are already free, and you bring the two together, and that's true compassion. Because true compassion doesn't just mean you weep when the other person weeps, you weep also.

You may weep, but underneath the weeping, there's joy. The joy that knows of the formless. That knows that you are in your essence indestructible.

Not as an abstract idea, but as a feeling realization, so to speak. So humor is a wonderful thing, and I'm sure that Jesus and other teachers had a lot of humor, too. All the teachers did, and just the disciples later on said, oh, we mustn't put that joke in.

That doesn't look serious enough. Beware of any spiritual teacher who is deadly serious. Because even the Zen masters who look dreadfully serious, they only look like that.

There's an enormous amount of humor inside them that's hidden in all the Zen stories and the way they deal with people. So they just look like that. But if you look into their eyes, or if you see a drawing done by a great artist of a Zen master, you see underneath their perhaps frightening demeanor, there is a softness also, and there's a gentle smile hidden somewhere there.

And then, of course, you have the beautiful image. Traditionally, all Buddha images have a slight smile. This is the Buddha smile, a very slight hint of a smile that comes with knowing yourself, knowing the essence of being.

And then you have the images influenced by Taoism in China of the Fat Buddha. They are wonderful. There's this man with a huge belly, toothless in many cases, or just one tooth left.

And his belly is huge, and he's continuously laughing. Laughter And many people have that at home in China and nowadays in the West also. And it's wonderful to see whenever you think you have a problem, just look at him.

Laughter And he's laughing not at you. He's laughing not because he despises the world or he's callous towards human suffering. He's laughing because he's rooted within in the formless.

And so that's a wonderful image. Laughter You can also practice a laughing meditation. I haven't done that yet.

Laughter That frees up a lot of rigid structures inside. But here the laughing happens spontaneously and it's wonderful. Okay.

One there, and then we go there. Okay. Oh.

[Speaker 4] (1:07:11 - 1:07:16)

Thank you. Can a fool realize his enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:18 - 1:07:22)

Thank you. Can a fool realize...

[Speaker 4] (1:07:22 - 1:07:22)

A fool?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:23 - 1:19:18)

Oh, thank you. Wonderful question. There are some wonderful images.

Fool is a very ancient mythological figure. The tarot card of the fool and so on. Now, by fool, let's say we mean someone whose mental capacities are undeveloped.

I would say somebody who is not trapped in the usual structures of compulsive thinking, not because he or she has transcended compulsive thinking, but has not arrived at compulsive thinking. And in that sense, that human being is already enlightened because he has not... It's not the enlightenment that we are addressing here, but that

state of not yet trapped in thought has many similarities with the enlightened state.

One could say he doesn't need enlightenment because in his own way he already is enlightened. In modern contemporary mythology, which is films, there's a beautiful example of that in the figure of Forrest Gump in the film. Somebody whose mental capacities are undeveloped but who lives in many ways just like an enlightened person would live.

First of all, he doesn't have an ego. Everything that comes, everything he needs, naturally comes to him. His life unfolds naturally.

He doesn't struggle for anything. Everything comes at the right moment. And he achieves, he even does great things, but never says I did that, because the I hasn't arisen yet.

He has to go to Vietnam, and even there wherever he goes, he is a force for good. Even when he has to go to the war in Vietnam, he saves many people. He's a great hero.

He doesn't look at himself as a great hero because he doesn't have a mental image of myself having done that. He just explains that's what happened. I did that and so on.

And so in many ways he is already enlightened and you can say he doesn't need enlightenment because he is already there. For us, we can't go back there. He doesn't really need to go through thinking.

He's fine. It seems to be the destiny of some humans to be connected and there may be a few remaining civilizations, remnants of ancient civilizations where humans live in oneness with nature and oneness with each other and they don't need the Buddha. They already, just as an animal, there are some dogs or cats they sometimes meet.

In some cases they have suffered a lot or they are very old and they have reached the enlightenment of the dog or cat being. The old cat who cannot be bothered anymore with catching birds because the cat knows it's pointless anyway. They're too old.

And so they go around and they're just completely there. And the old dog. There are beings who seem to have completely fulfilled the purpose of their existence in that form and have found the connectedness with the formless within.

The form has fulfilled its purpose and the connectedness is there. This is not our destiny to return. We are all, we have been or are most of us halfway stuck in the human mind.

So there's no way of going back. We cannot become fools again and yet when you go beyond thinking from the point of view of mind it often appears that you no longer know anything. So in that way we also become fools from the point of view of conceptual thought.

And there are many similarities with the way that an enlightened person lives who has transcended thought, means is no longer trapped in thinking, to somebody who has not yet gone through the evolutionary stage of being trapped in thinking. Didn't have to for some reason. Consciousness flowered there through that form.

And that's beautiful. For us it's transcending thought and then becoming a fool again. Yes one could say, but yet we don't become forest gum.

There is a knowing that comes when you have transcended thought. There is an awareness that wasn't there before in the natural state. It's a regaining of the natural state, but the regaining of the natural state that also all ancient civilizations speak of The myth of the golden age that exists in India, in almost every civilization, you have the myth that there was a time when humans lived in peace and happily.

The world was a kind of paradise. You have the same myth expressed in the beginning of the Bible. So there must be an ancient truth there.

There is a natural state that humans lost. Those humans who didn't lose it don't need it. They are fine.

But it is the destiny, the evolutionary destiny of consciousness is for humans to lose it and then to regain it. And that's where we are. And so in some ways you will look to humans who are still trapped in thinking when you live aligned to the present moment, don't compulsively label things, are no longer a walking story.

You become quite simple. The need to be special falls away. You become very ordinary.

Very ordinary because you don't need to project a sense of specialness anymore and attempt to find your identity in there because you already are in touch with the preciousness that is the essence of who you are. So you don't need to seek a specialness in form anymore. So what a freedom that comes to us now of not needing to be special anymore to get some sense of who you are.

To become ordinary. You have that beautifully expressed in the Taoist sages. The whole Tao Te Ching, the Chinese Book of Wisdom, is all an expression of ordinariness.

To be ordinary. Not to project yourself wanting, needing to be someone. But happy to be no one.

And that looks quite foolish from the point of view of our civilization. And people may look upon you as nobody. And that's wonderful.

The only regret is not really a regret. I have about the power of now that became so well known and with it the being that gave it birth no more, just is the projection of specialness. Whereas there was such beauty in being totally ordinary and nobody

doubted that I was ordinary.

Well, a few of you said, you must go and see him, he's so ordinary. Just to be, just to live with the present moment, see what the present moment nothing could be more ordinary than just to live aligned with whatever is here now. That's all you ever have to do.

It's pretty ordinary. Just this. The famous Zen saying, chopping wood, carrying water.

It's expressed in that, it's a very profound Zen saying. This is meant to encapsulate the whole of Zen existence. Chopping wood, carrying water.

Two of the most ordinary activities at that time when people did that. In our cases, there'll be something else. Most people, well, don't chop wood.

Well, perhaps some people still do. It is beautiful to be just just that. Whatever you happen to be doing at this moment, there's no more than this moment.

Chopping wood. Ah. Carrying water.

Just that. Peace. Aliveness.

No interference of mind that says, how many more weeks or years do I have to chop this wood? If I don't do something now, I'll still be stuck in ten years' time chopping wood. The illusion of time is back.

Here. But only on the external. Not in here.

On the external level, the clock keeps ticking. Tick, tick, tick. Or whatever modern clocks do.

This is not the end. There is no end. But this is not the end even on the level of form.

After our little break, I will meet with you again here in about 30 so-called minutes. And we will sit together just in silence for a little while. Unless something else happens.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:08 - 1:21:27)

Yes, I'm going to start with, I'm aware that you are not, that you don't find personal history important. But still, I would like to ask you some questions about your life and your background. So, how did you grow up?

Where did you grow up? And in what kind of family?

[Speaker 1] (1:21:28 - 1:24:26)

I grew up in northwest Germany up to the age of 13. My father was a journalist. My

mother a housewife.

Then my parents got divorced when I was 12. And my father dropped out of conventional life and society. He was an early drop-out, before the term drop-out even existed.

And he went to live in Spain. So, my parents got divorced. My father left to live in Spain.

And I was very unhappy at school. So, at 13, I refused to go to school any longer. That was my only act of rebellion as a child.

I was, on the whole, a very meek, obedient child. But something within me prevented me from going to school. I just couldn't do it anymore.

So, I stopped. My mother didn't know what to do with me. So, finally, it was decided that I should join my father in Spain, who had remarried, and lived a very unconventional life.

He lived on his savings for a few years, and then he started working there. So, I spent my teenage years from 13 to 19 in Spain. So, the Spanish language became my second language.

I was taken out of the culture that had surrounded me for the first 13 years of my life, and then placed in a completely different environment and culture. And that probably was a good thing, because if one spends one's whole life in one particular cultural environment, one tends to become conditioned by that particular culture without knowing it. So, by experiencing different cultures as a child, that somehow perhaps made the cultural conditioning less deep, less rigid.

And my father was always a very unconventional person. Some people would call him eccentric. So, when I got to Spain, he asked me, do you want to go to school here?

And, of course, I said no. And so, he said, okay, then don't go to school, and do what you like. And that's what I was able to do.

I was reading certain books that I liked to read, studying. I began reading some literature. I went to language classes in the evenings and afternoons, and studied some other subjects that I was interested in, like astronomy and so on.

So, I grew up without especially in my teenage years, without the pressure that most youngsters experience. And then at 19, I went to on my own to live in England.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:27 - 1:24:30)

Okay. And then you started to have an education in England?

[Speaker 1] (1:24:31 - 1:39:57)

Yes. In England, I was offered a job, although I didn't have any formal qualifications.

Miraculously, somebody offered me a job, and I was actually teaching English and Spanish, sorry, German and Spanish for a few years at a language school.

And then a kind of quest started. And also, what also started at that point was already the beginnings of depression that I would experience periodically. And living in a state of increasing anxiety, a kind of generalized anxiety.

And I was looking for some answer to the dilemma of life and living, and I was looking to philosophy and the intellect for an answer. So I began to read a lot, and then I thought the answers would probably be found at the universities, the professors would know. So I took the exams that I needed in evening classes to get to university, and then I went on to London University, where I did languages and literature.

And increasingly became more and more unhappy, and continued to search and absorb more and more knowledge. And gradually, beginning to realize that they didn't really have the answers to life's dilemma. I remember there was one professor at London University that I liked very much, and I would go to his classes and admired him.

Very knowledgeable, and one day we arrived on a Monday morning, and we were told that he had just committed suicide. And that shook me inside, and I realized that certainly these people that I looked to for an answer didn't have it either. And so my depression intensified, and I did very well in the degree examinations, because I studied so hard, out of fear really.

I was driven by anxiety. And then after graduating from London University, I didn't do anything for about a year, and that was the year in which I became even more unhappy and depressed, and when an inner shift suddenly happened inside me. It was in my 29th year I woke up in the middle of the night, and this was not uncommon for me, waking up in the middle of the night and feeling intensely depressed, and in a state of great fear at the same time.

And that happened again that night, and the thought occurred to me, I can't live with myself any longer. And that thought repeated itself in my mind, I just, I can't live with myself. And then suddenly, I looked at the thought, I kind of stood back from that thought, and looked at it, and said, that's a strange thought.

I cannot live with myself. Am I one, or am I two? This thought seems to show that there's two people here, I and the self that I cannot live with.

I didn't have an answer to that question, it's just that question, that puzzle arose in my mind. Much later it reminded me of koans that they have in Zen, that are puzzles that are designed to stop the mind. For example, what is the sound of one hand clapping, is a famous koan.

And it doesn't have an answer on an intellectual level, and so the question that arose in

my mind also didn't have an answer on an intellectual level. Who am I, and who is myself that I cannot live with? But that question triggered an inner shift.

Something inside me, and I didn't understand it at that point, must have disidentified from the self, the unhappy me, as I later called it. So a kind of inner disidentification happened. The I am, which I later recognized as the consciousness that I am, separated itself from the conditioned entity, the conditioned consciousness that provided me with my sense of identity, the self.

And that consisted largely of an unhappy story. So then I felt I was like being drawn into some kind of vortex of energy, as if I were disappearing in that. And there was still a moment of resistance.

And I heard something almost like a voice inside me that said, resist nothing. So I gave up resisting the feeling of, almost the feeling of disappearing into nothingness. And so that, I don't remember very much else of that night.

All I know is that the next morning I woke up and I opened my eyes and I looked around the room and everything seemed as if I was seeing it for the first time. Fresh, new, alive. The light coming through the windows.

Familiar objects on the table. It looked fresh, new, and alive. So I got up and went out for a walk and I looked around and everything seemed so peaceful.

Even the traffic in the city seemed so peaceful. And I knew something strange had happened. There was suddenly, everything was filled with aliveness and peace and I didn't know why.

And so, and that went on. And then this inner peace as the background to all experiences and the background to all sense perceptions, even as the background to my thinking, they never really left me again. But it took me a long time to understand it, to be able to put it into words.

And so a little later I started investigating other spiritual teachings for the first time. Buddhism, Christianity, and more contemporary spiritual teachings. And very quickly I recognized the truth that is in many cases hiding underneath sometimes centuries of cultural additions, interpretations, and misinterpretations.

And I could see the truth that's in Buddhism, that's in Christianity, the original teachings. And in turn, they shed light on what had happened to me. For example, I picked up the New Testament and I read Jesus' words, the peace that passes all understanding.

And I said, that's exactly what I feel. I have this peace and I don't understand what it is. So he must have had the same experience.

Peace suddenly arose which was not causally related to anything in the external world. It wasn't caused by something wonderful happening in my external environment. So it didn't seem to have a cause, an external cause.

And then later I visited Zen teachers and so on. And again, I recognized the truth of Zen immediately. But they also helped me to understand and put what had happened to me into a wider context.

For example, I remember talking to one Buddhist monk who said, who talked about coming to the end of always having to think, thinking. And he said, Zen is about not thinking ultimately. And I immediately realized something that I actually, strangely I hadn't realized before, that my thought processes ever since that happened that night, had become reduced by maybe 80%.

So I wasn't actually thinking that much anymore. And that's why there was so much peace. So I realized the continuous mental noise, as I now call it, which is the compulsive and largely useless thinking that most people are continuously engaged in, that had come to an end.

There would still be some thought, and thought could, I could use thinking when I needed it and occasionally thoughts would come in and out, but there were huge stretches of no thought. And in those long gaps and intervals of no thought, there was that wonderful experience of inner peace. And I realized that inner peace had been there before, even when I was still anxious, but had simply been covered up by the anxiety, by the hyperactive mind.

And so this then gradually developed into a spiritual teaching. So the spiritual teaching now attempts to show people that they have within themselves already what they may perhaps are looking for on the outside. The aliveness, the peace, the sense of deep inner fulfillment is already present in every human being as their innermost essence.

So it's not a question of needing to obtain or acquire something new, which is often what spiritual seekers are looking for. Everybody is looking for, to acquire something to fulfill him or herself. They may be looking for it on a material level, or on the level of experiences, or on the level of accumulating knowledge, or accumulating wealth, or spiritual seekers want to add more spiritual experiences to who they are, or find themselves at some point in the future, and you can't because if you're looking to the future to find yourself, you're missing yourself already, the essence of your being, which you can only find in the now.

So my realization that night took me years to understand, and in the process of understanding it, at the same time people would already come to me occasionally and ask questions. So gradually I was able to talk about it, and I was able to recognize in others what I had been through. It's the same dilemma, perhaps with the exception that I

was suffering from it more acutely than many others, that's all.

I was even more deeply immersed in the mental noise and the emotional turmoil than would be normal. But the same mechanism operates in everyone. So the teaching now is to point out that there is a dimension in you that is deeper than what you normally identify with as yourself, that is deeper than the me, the personal history that most people believe is who they are.

And so the recognition of that dimension comes when you make room inside yourself for the present moment, because it can only come out of an inner alignment with now, as I call it, which is life itself. The stream of thinking is always concerned with past and future. So for most people who are identified with thinking all the time, every thought is invested with a sense of self, a me.

Every thought grips you completely, and you are in it. This is what identified means. Every thought that arises becomes a me, and you think it, and you are in it.

And so most people are dragged along all day long by this mind stream, one thought after another. And within that mind stream there is a mind-made sense of self, a me, consisting of past memories and experiences, and things that my mind has identified with, and that contribute to my identity. They are all thought forms.

For example, my possessions, my knowledge, my experiences, or what people have done to me, or what I have done to people, things that whatever you identify with and then hang on to in your mind becomes a me. And that was really the self that that night I recognized as not really me. So there's the mind stream, there's identification with the mind stream, and there's the possibility of stepping out of the mind stream by accessing the present moment.

Now to most people the present moment is, almost doesn't exist, because what they are really interested in is the next moment, or the one after that. So they live always towards the future. They live towards the next moment.

And unconsciously they regard the next moment, the next point in the future that they need to get to, unconsciously they regard that as more important than this moment. Not realizing that the future moment that they so desperately want to get to, tonight, tomorrow, whatever, in any activity needing, wanting to get it out of the way as quickly as possible, needing to get to the end point. On a small scale, on a large scale.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:58 - 1:39:59)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:01 - 1:45:40)

And so they don't recognize that the future has no existence except as a thought form. So when you always live towards the future you live your life trapped in a conceptual reality of thought forms, which assumes a greater significance for you than the immediate reality of life, which is always now. Because your life consists entirely of the present moment.

And to most people that's if you truly realize the significance of that statement, your entire life consists of the present moment. Your life is never not this moment. Even when you remember the past, you can only remember it now.

And when you think about the future, you can only think about it now. But people live as if the present moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome in order to get to some better point, which never arrives. So that's a mad way to live.

And it makes living hard. It makes living into an effort. We've been conditioned over thousands of years the human mind, which was a wonderful thing, the ability to think at some point a long, long time ago must have arisen in humans, the ability to conceptualize mentally.

And this has opened up a whole new dimension for humanity. And of course it has made humanity the most powerful species on the planet, because humans are not physically the strongest species, but they were able to dominate all the other species because of their ability to think. And so that developed slowly, probably in a mythological form, it's expressed in the story of Genesis, at the beginning of the Bible, when they eat this apple that comes from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad to differentiate this that that comes only through the ability to think, to analyze, to separate.

And so that gradually developed in humans, and at first it wasn't a problem. It opened up new possibilities. Then over thousands and thousands of years the thinking mind became stronger.

It grew and grew. And gradually they lost connectedness with something that is deeper and more essential within themselves. We could call that being.

The sense of aliveness. A deeper intelligence even that is more than just the thoughts that go on in your head. So gradually humans, because of the growth of the thinking mind, lost their ability to sense their deeper connectedness with life.

And then now we have arrived at a point where our whole sense of who we are is caught up in the mind and in thought. So we have been through an evolutionary stage, which was a necessary one for humanity. And we could call that the stage of mind, the stage of thought.

And to such a point now that we are completely possessed, I use that word, we are possessed by the mind without knowing it. We cannot stop thinking. It seems we can,

but for most people that's not yet a reality.

They have to think. The compulsion to think and to derive your sense of self from the movement of thought. We are arriving at the end of this whole evolutionary stage.

And for humanity now to go on, it needs to transcend the mind. No longer be possessed by the mind. To go beyond the compulsion to think into a deeper level of being.

So it's almost like regaining what they have lost. But when you regain something that you lost, you regain it with a deeper awareness. And this is the process that we are involved in now, that humanity is involved in now, because an evolutionary transformation, a transformation of consciousness, really is no longer a luxury so to speak, is no longer optional for humanity.

For the first time in the history of humanity, a transformation of consciousness is a necessity if humanity is to survive, because we are creating havoc on the planet. We are creating hell to a large extent on a planet that potentially is paradise.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:42 - 1:45:54)

Is that why you I mean, you could have chosen just to stay on your own and being on your own, but you chose to be a teacher and to go out and teach. Why is that?

[Speaker 1] (1:45:54 - 1:47:55)

Yes. Being a teacher was the response to a demand that came to me. Not so much, it wasn't a conscious choice that, oh, I want to teach or I need to teach.

It simply arose out of first of all, individual people coming to me and asking questions or wanting some kind of help or becoming drawn, becoming interested in what I had to say and experiencing an inner shift after coming a few times. And so, being a teacher that developed organically without me ever deciding I want to be a teacher and so from seeing individuals it gradually developed into occasionally meeting in small groups and that went on for a few years. Out of all these meetings with individual people and small groups I had I took notes after meeting with people often because things that I said in those individual sessions or group meetings were things that were new to me also.

They came out of that moment. They came out as a response to a person's question. So I would often take notes and I had a collection of notes after a few years.

Some of those notes later became incorporated into The Power of Now, the book. So The Power of Now is in part the result of my work with people over a number of years and in part the arising of also a new teaching in the process of writing it.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:57 - 1:48:14)

I read in an interview you gave that for a lot of years you were only absorbed in being and you were not doing anything. And it was a kind of unbalance in your life. Could you describe that?

[Speaker 1] (1:48:14 - 1:51:11)

Yes. Well, after the transformation happened that night my external life for a few more years went on as if nothing much had changed on the external level. I went on to do graduate work.

However, my heart was never fully in it anymore. In intellectual pursuits, in analytical work. But my external life had a certain momentum.

So it went on for a few more years and then that momentum came to an end. And a point arrived when I was at Cambridge doing graduate work and some teaching and suddenly I realized this has come to an end and I simply walked away from it all. And after that, two years followed in which I did very little and I didn't have a home of my own.

I would drift from here to there. Spent most days just sitting. When it was warm enough I would sit outside on park benches or walk around.

I was then in London at that time. And I was so deeply immersed in the the the peace almost the bliss of the simple experience of being the simple feeling the goodness of life every moment that I lost interest in future completely. There were no ambitions and I wasn't even interested in doing anything.

So from an external viewpoint one could say my life for a while became unbalanced. I became so deeply immersed in being that I lost interest in doing. One could almost say I lost the ability for a while to be active in the world.

And then gradually the ability to be active in the world came back. So a balance after a while re-established itself. So I'm now able to be active in the world and at the same time be rooted in being.

One does not exclude the other. But for some reason I had to go very deeply within for a while. Perhaps even on a larger scale it may be that some people for a while have to go very deeply into being simply to provide a balance on the level of the collective consciousness because most human beings are totally lost in doing.

So it may require a few humans who go very deeply into being to provide a balance although on a personal level it might look as if they were unbalanced.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:12 - 1:51:21)

Are you always in presence now? Don't you get relapses? Don't you ever get angry or

frustrated?

[Speaker 1] (1:51:22 - 1:52:55)

No. I live in surrender to the present moment and so that is always there. Whatever happens right now I recognise that it is futile to argue with whatever is happening at this moment.

So emotions occasionally still come. If I see human suffering I sometimes weep. I can cry and yet even then there is a deep sense of peace in the background even though I may cry externally if I see especially humans inflicting so much suffering on other human beings and on animals and on nature, on the planet.

So sometimes tears come and yet deep down I know that ultimately life is timeless and indestructible and I know that death is not the opposite of life but only the opposite of birth. Life is beyond the forms of life. Life is timeless and immortal.

That which underlies the entire manifested world and that dimension is present in each human being.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:59 - 1:53:02)

So what is your life like today? Do you have a family?

[Speaker 1] (1:53:03 - 1:57:48)

No. My life is now very different from what it was before, especially before the book came out. I was already teaching before the book came out but soon after the book came out the book grew very quickly.

At first through word of mouth for one year and then other people discovered it and started writing about it and speaking about it and then it accelerated. So soon after the book came out the teaching developed a momentum that was almost overwhelming and it turned my external life around completely from living a very sheltered life, a very quiet life, almost a hermit life. Suddenly everybody wanted me to teach and demands for this and that were coming in, invitations flooding in from all over the world and so on and then I responded at the beginning to almost every invitation and then I realised it's impossible, I can no longer respond to every invitation.

So nevertheless my life is now almost public and the groups become bigger and bigger in the United States the average number for talks is 2000 people now and so I'm very much out there in the world and this is not something that naturally I would have chosen for myself. My natural inclination would be to be withdrawn, not to be known. I like to be invisible in public places, not to be noticed and that becomes more difficult now and yet I accept the fact that this is how it is.

So there's a lot of travelling and there's been so much in the past few years that now I feel I need to cut back for a while and I believe my feeling is that the cycle of going out into the world which has lasted now for 6 years may be coming to an end and there may be coming a cycle of withdrawal for a little while in which I may another book may come into being and so I've had to surrender to the fact that my external life changed completely. It's been wonderful too to see how many people are being reached by the teaching, the book and the talks and the retreats how many people are open to the message. That was the greatest surprise after the book came out because when I was writing the book, the book wrote itself, one can almost say my feeling was that only people who had already been on the spiritual path for a long time would respond to the book and that was not the case.

People responded to the book, both people who had been on the spiritual path for many years, they responded but also people who had never read a spiritual book in their lives who had never had access to that dimension they suddenly wrote to me and said, my life has changed, this is incredible I've read this book several times already and it's fresh and new every time and there's so much peace in my life suddenly.

So the book seems to have reached all kinds of people no matter what their background is, also education doesn't seem to matter very much some highly educated people are open to it and others who are not equally open because it's not difficult to understand on an intellectual level and yet, not everybody is open to the book there are some people there are people who wrote to me and said I bought a copy for a close friend and he found it completely meaningless he read two or three pages and said it doesn't make sense to me and so they put the book on the shelf and it may well be that in ten or twenty years time they take the book down from the shelf again and suddenly there's an inner readiness so many people are open but certainly not everybody

[Speaker 2] (1:57:49 - 1:58:04)

I have some more questions about this new situation of yours I mean you have become a success and your books have sold in millions of copies all over the world and you have become famous and you're making a lot of money how do you handle that?

[Speaker 1] (1:58:07 - 2:00:34)

I'm not very good at handling the external things like money and so basically it hasn't made very much difference to my life and I haven't really paid much attention to it most of my attention is absorbed by teaching or answering questions and so on and yes I live in somewhat more spacious surroundings now than I used to but that's really all so that hasn't made very much difference I'm hardly aware of it for a large part of my life I lived with very little money and probably people would have said I lived below the poverty line as they call it and yet I never felt poor I always felt I have quite enough and now I don't feel wealthy any more than I did then so it's exactly the same feeling so it's a very

abstract thing the fact that now there is more wealth in my life on an external on the external dimension is only an abstract truth to me it has not affected me inside at all and it's only very slightly affected my external life I don't I walk around cities and look at shops and I sometimes like to look at things but very rarely do I actually feel the impulse to go and buy something it's enough to look at a beautiful object and then walk on so I don't know what I wouldn't know what to buy with it there is the possibility at some point that there may be a centre a spiritual centre coming into being so if that happens then some of the income from the book may flow into that that is something that I'm not actively planning now but I have a feeling it may happen

[Speaker 2] (2:00:35 - 2:00:50)

and I also imagine that many people want to have something from you and maybe they are admiring you or putting you in a place of a guru and how do you relate to that do you need to protect yourself

[Speaker 1] (2:00:51 - 2:03:43)

yes before it used to be the way that people, anybody who wanted to see me would just call me or talk to me on the phone I would talk to them and say can I see you yes come and then after the book came out that became impossible because the phone kept ringing and so in one sense when I was only reaching a small number of people however there was the satisfaction of having close personal contact with people who came to me now the close personal contact because the numbers have grown so much that has become lost to a large extent and yet the teaching is reaching far far far more people than it did before so really and this is very much the same in any situation in life, every situation has its own limitations there were certain limitations to my life on an external level when the teaching was not yet reaching many people the teaching was very limited in that sense although it was very satisfying now the limitation is that people cannot access me personally very easily I have to have several people in between me and the world simply because on a practical level it's the only way I can live I cannot reply to every email or answer every letter and thousands and thousands of letters come in all the time and emails and I cannot just pick up the phone and answer it so that it's harder for individual people to reach me it's difficult if not impossible and that's simply I need to accept that is a limitation that's unavoidable knowing however that the teaching is reaching far more people than ever before yes it's a pity, I still sometimes have a little group at home in Vancouver of people I've known for a long time even before the book came out they used to come to see me so occasionally we get together as a little group of 20 people or so in my living room and I enjoy that very much so that's how it is it's always a question of surrendering to whatever the present moment presents you with and whatever limitations there may be at this moment there's no situation that is free of limitation of one kind or another

[Speaker 2] (2:03:45 - 2:03:52)

do you have an explanation why your teaching applies so much to modern people

[Speaker 1] (2:03:53 - 2:08:30)

well the the terms used, the words the terminology that is used in the teaching the words that are used which are no more than pointers not philosophical explanations they are relatively neutral they are not they don't carry the weight of centuries and centuries of past as they do in ancient teachings so they are not culturally conditioned in that sense, relatively neutral and so they can reach many people no matter what their background is people who may have a religious background can be reached if they are open enough because I don't deny that there is deep truth in every religion this is why I quote in The Power of Now from Buddhism and Hinduism and Christian teachings and even people who have no religious background whatsoever can be reached by the teaching this is one reason perhaps why it has reached so many people and another reason is that the The Power of Now was written it came out of that state of consciousness that it points to so it came out of a state of inner stillness and receptiveness spontaneously, the writing was a spontaneous act although I incorporated some of the writings that I had done in previous years there was an enormous very strong creative impulse that flew into the writing it flowed into the writing so the book contains an energy this sounds perhaps a little mysterious but many people have said it that when people read the book the words go beyond the mere informational value of the words this is why one can re-read the book many times and still feel it's fresh and new and every time you read and it may just be one or two pages the reading of it can put you back into the state of the state that I call presence because whatever the book speaks about ultimately points to that inner state of alignment with the present moment, so people can just pick up the book, read a couple of pages and feel the mental noise slows down or subsides and they become awake again alert, present in the now and they can sense some peace inside and so that's what it's all about, so that is at work in the book and it is also at work in the group sessions because as you in the group sessions nothing is ever prepared I don't come with a script I don't even come with any idea in my head what we are going to do today or talk about today when I start when I sit down on the chair I have no idea even a few seconds before opening my mouth what's going to come out so in that sense you can say it comes really out of the immediacy of the present moment and so what words come out depends very often on the energy field of the group and so there is an interaction between the teaching the teacher and the taught there is an ancient eastern saying that says the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching and that's how it is and that's why the teaching has great power because it doesn't come from the accumulated knowledge of the mind but it comes out of the immediacy of the present moment, it's not prepared and even on a retreat that lasts for 3, 4, 5 days sometimes there is absolutely no pre-planned structure to the retreat, it all grows organically out of the present moment

[Speaker 2] (2:08:35 - 2:09:10)

I have one question at least one more you talk about surrendering and you talk about suffering as one path to surrendering to presence and you say that some people don't need the suffering but anyway surrendering is beyond will and wanting so what does it take and what about grace I imagine that it takes grace also, could you comment on that?

[Speaker 1] (2:09:17 - 2:14:03)

You won't surrender which means, surrender means only accept this moment as it is but you won't be able to surrender unless you're completely fed up with suffering you've had enough suffering and at some level you recognize that most of your suffering is self-created it is created out of resistance to what is it is created out of an interpretation of something that is, it comes from a thought, from an interpretation, not from the situation so you realize really that I've had enough suffering and only when you've truly had enough suffering in your life are you able to say I don't need it anymore suffering is a wonderful teacher suffering is most people's only spiritual teacher and suffering deepens you it gradually erodes the mind made sense of self the ego and for some people the point arrives where they realize I have suffered enough and that for example is the case with almost all the people who come to a retreat if you ask them they've all had their share of human suffering otherwise they wouldn't be open to the message they've had their share of human suffering and they've reached a point where they are ready to listen to the message that says there is another way to live there is another way in which you can live that does not create further suffering for yourself because to a large extent humans create their own suffering and so when you are ready to hear that message and that's really the message that is in every religion that's the message the central message of Buddhism is the end of suffering and even the central message of the teaching of Jesus is finding the pearl of great price finding the kingdom of heaven that is within you here and now as Jesus says and that of course is the end of living in a state of suffering so one could say that you need suffering for you to realize, for you to come to a point of realization that you do not need to suffer anymore, there is a paradox here, if I had not suffered I would not, this teaching would not exist so you could say it has come partly as a result of intense suffering because as a human being I would not have evolved spiritually if I had not suffered so suffering was my main teacher and suffering is for many people their main teacher but then some people are, when they are ready they come into contact with a spiritual teaching or teacher and that can speed up the process of realization that you don't need to suffer anymore you are ready to hear that so that was, the Buddha talked about nothing else already 2600 years ago that there can be an end to self-inflicted suffering and when you don't inflict suffering on yourself anymore and remember it's the thoughts, your thoughts make you suffer more than anything else, it's not usually the situation it's your interpretation of the situation, of how dreadful it all is and so when you see that then you see there is another way to live in which I no

longer mentally argue with what is and that's the end of self-inflicted suffering and if I no longer inflict suffering on myself I no longer inflict suffering on others because the two go together

[Speaker 2] (2:14:06 - 2:14:15)

but what will make me or somebody else take that step is it just acceptance

[Speaker 1] (2:14:16 - 2:15:52)

it's acceptance but acceptance won't come unless you've reached this inner point of readiness and this is why I never try to convince anybody that what I'm saying is true or they should practice something, I never say you should do this or trying to convince somebody who doesn't want to believe it that is pointless only if you are ready internally for it and so one way of putting it is to say if you have suffered enough then you're ready then you're open to it and you immediately see the truth of it you immediately see that you ultimately make yourself suffer it's not the situation, it's the mental interpretation of the situation which in most cases is a form of resistance and that creates the suffering and so you need to when you hear these words if you don't immediately recognize the truth if there's an inner arguing that's fine there's no should here there's no the teaching never says this is how you should live, it's only if you can hear the truth of it, it will make sense to you and then it can help you so it can only help those who have an inner readiness but there are many many people alive now in whom the readiness is there they are able to hear it to truly hear it and immediately recognize yes this is true convincing never works

[Speaker 2] (2:15:54 - 2:15:59)

but being in the present I mean is it a possibility for everybody

[Speaker 1] (2:16:00 - 2:16:07)

it's a being in the present moment is a possibility for those who are ready for it not yet for everybody

[Speaker 2] (2:16:08 - 2:16:16)

what if we were all living in presence, I mean what would happen, would we have electricity and would it work

[Speaker 1] (2:16:16 - 2:18:04)

one thing is certain that the world would look very different from the way it is now, we can't possibly imagine how the human world would look if everybody lived in a different state of consciousness in a state that is predominantly a state of inner peace what kind of civilization would we create out of a state of inner peace it's impossible to predict all

we can say is that probably it would not be as complex as it is now people would not be running around continuously engaged in largely pointless activities it would probably not be such a noisy civilization as it is now because no civilization has ever been as noisy as this one and that's simply because whatever human beings create externally is a reflection of their inner state so we are polluting the planet simply because our inner selves are being polluted by an enormous amount of negativity of continuous resistance so the outer is always a reflection of the inner so if the inner is predominantly a state of inner peace we create a peaceful world on the outside what exactly what exact form that would take we don't know, we'd have to see what it is it would probably be a much more simple world more harmonious and beautiful not nature is beautiful already but I'm speaking of the human made human made world

[Speaker 2] (2:18:07 - 2:18:13)

is it possible in a few words to say what is the essence of your teaching, is that possible?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:15 - 2:21:08)

well, the essence is very simple and the essence could probably be taught and perhaps one day will be taught to very young children at school and children are very close to it anyway the essence is I could put it in the most simple terms because the most simple is often the most powerful the essence is to make the present moment into your friend, not your enemy to always ask yourself what is my relationship with the present moment at this moment of course what is my inner relationship with the present moment is the present moment am I friendly towards the present moment or am I hostile towards the present moment, is the present moment my enemy and then that would be enough to bring about a change because when you realize that you are making the present moment into your enemy and you also know that that's all you ever have in life, then you realize it is a mad way to live to treat this moment as if it were an obstacle to where you want to get to and you never get there because it's always now then your relationship towards the present moment changes it changes and your relationship becomes one of yes rather than no to what is it does not mean that you become passive or that you will never do anything again it simply means that the foundation for any action you take is the state of yes to what is and if there is a state the inner state of yes to what is that is the state of inner peace and inner peace is much more powerful as a foundation for right action than the state of resistance and negativity so that is the essence find that state of inner alignment with the present moment which comes with the yes and then see what happens see how your world changes as you no longer resist the isness of this moment

[Speaker 2] (2:21:08 - 2:21:29)

thank you it was what you concluded the teaching about your role as a teacher and you said something about you have nothing to teach to nobody something like that could you

just state that how you see your role as a teacher

[Speaker 1] (2:21:31 - 2:24:11)

in conventional terms teaching means that I give you information that you didn't know I add something to you so a student absorbs new information accumulates new information but in spiritual teaching the teacher just points to the truth that is already in every human being and also points to the way in which that truth that is already in every human being is covered up and anybody who is ready can immediately recognize the truth of the teaching as if they had already known it because on some level they already knew it and that's why I say I don't really have anything to teach in the sense of adding information to you there is nothing that you need to add in order to find yourself and be yourself you can add on an external level it's nice to learn new things, it's nice to explore this or that and yet on an essential level the essential level is the level of who you are your innermost sense of self it's the level of being on the most essential level no matter where you are at in your life, what your life situation is, on the most essential level nothing needs to be added to who you are so the spiritual teaching is not an amour it's not an addition it's simply a pointing towards that which is already there and those who are ready then suddenly recognize the truth of it, recognize means they already knew it, it's almost like remembering, ah yes and then there's no there's no question about convincing is not necessary it's immediate realization, then spiritual teaching works as it should so that's how it operates and that's the difference between a conventional teaching and spiritual teaching, in some sense one could say the spiritual teaching is almost the opposite of the conventional teaching if anything it takes something away from you it takes away that which covered up who you are but it's not taken away by the teacher, it's taken away by yourself when you see it and become conscious of it

[Speaker 2] (2:24:13 - 2:24:18)

that's very clear yes thank you very much thank you for your time

[Speaker 1] (2:30:04 - 3:36:21)

meditative meditation welcome to our meditative evening perhaps meditation to meditate successfully the idea that you're doing a meditation can be quite an obstacle so maybe that's the first thing we can get rid of tonight the preconceptions and the expectations that come with that term so why did we call it guided meditation well we had to use some word to get you here haha meditation is usually something that you do among many other things doing implies all kinds of things, it implies time even future to some extent and yet true meditation, if you even want to call it that, it's better not to call it anything it's not to do with doing it's not a doing it's the realization that you are of being which underlies all doing is prior to all doing thoughts emotions is prior to that and yet the simple realization not the realization who you are because there can be so many perspectives on that not the realization how you fit into the totality of the cosmos, how

that seemingly little life fleeting existence fits into the totality somewhere not realizing how I fit into the whole it's impossible to comprehend but an alignment with the totality without the need to mentally understand anything a realization a simple realization that you are which is expressed in the sublime words I am and if you've missed elementary grammar at school you might not realize that I am is the first person singular of the verb to be you think it's two completely different words the realization that you are not as a concept but as a deeper sensing of the life that you are the aliveness the life and something helpful to realize that is to pretend for one moment that there is no past and no future shh I'm saying pretend so that everybody is still with me if I said there is no past and future some of you might suddenly start thinking just a second aren't you going to sign books in an hour huh and the moment you go into thinking you're off into the realm of mind the realm of things objects in consciousness every thought is an object in consciousness and every thought has a pulling power so it arises and it pulls your attention in and you start thinking okay but there is I came here half an hour ago there must be a past not realizing of course when you came here it was the present moment and when the books are going to be signed it will be the present moment because there is nothing else okay but no need to believe that let's pretend let's pretend for a moment that there is no past and future okay or let's just say past and future become peripheral to you who you are there's only this oh that is the entry point into the realization I am thinking is not required for that realization in fact it's a hindrance and you may sense a global feeling of presence or beingness that incorporates what we call the physical body when you are present completely present here now you are present not just with the head with the totality of your being in other words you sense an aliveness that's there in every cell of the body that is our meditation to be present with every cell of the body a subtle sense of aliveness in which the personal dimension becomes relatively unimportant what arises here is the dimension of conscious presence or consciousness itself it's spacious the moment you start to think a form arises consciousness is born into a form a thought form most human beings on the planet are lost in the forms that arise in their consciousness and when I say in their consciousness it's not entirely correct because there is not such a thing as my consciousness ultimately this consciousness and I am that if you use the word expression my consciousness this whole language unfortunately operates you create a duality and so here is me in this consciousness the same thing happens when you talk or think about my life and everybody thinks about it a lot of the time it's amazing how fascinating my life is and that's such a fundamental error or delusion to say my life because it implies that you have a life and that implies that you are separate from life there's you and there's life and you have it and then of course you start being afraid because you might lose it and then what's left of you so just to see that to say my life is obviously an illusion because how could you be separate from life you are life you don't have one and life takes on form temporary forms becomes what looks like a physical form and on the inner level life becomes thought forms and emotions and sense perceptions forms that consciousness takes is born into continuously the continuous dance of form amazing spectacle beautiful, wonderful but it

gets heavy and serious when all you know is the forms that consciousness takes and you never know yourself as consciousness itself being so we could say the forms that consciousness or life takes we could call that existence it stands exist means to stand out ex means out from latin is stands from stands, standing to stand out so whatever arises sense perceptions things thoughts they exist first they have a certain life span come and go entire universe exists, life forms go in and out of existence and then there is that which is prior to existence being I am so the play of form is a beautiful thing well forms are things but when that is all you know you don't know that which underlies the dance of form then the dance of form is no longer a dance it's not fun anymore it's not experienced or perceived as a play anymore it becomes deadly serious because that's all you know and every form matters it matters absolutely you know how worked up people get about things and you can see even people who mentally perhaps realize certain truths they say I'm beyond things now and then suddenly the phone rings what happened what he broke the contract another word for word for form we could just say the world and so the world is the world of things it's the world of material things which absorbs many people's large part of many people's attention what's the next thing they're looking always for the next thing to acquire to derive satisfaction from to associate with to identify with but things are not just material things and of course material things are everywhere in our civilization particularly we are we are suffocating under proliferation of things and bombarded with messages that we need more things but things are also events they are forms that arise and they pretend to be all important and life is not a play anymore and the older you get the heavier it gets and the more serious it gets you may have noticed in the statues of the Buddha the Buddha has a slight smile usually the good ones there are some bad ones where the Buddha looks serious but the good ones there is a hint of a smile and then you may ask why is he smiling if all is nothingness as some say emptiness then there is nothing what is there to smile about the smile arises because the Buddha is in touch with that which is prior to things to objects to form to the world not because he has made it in the world he is not smiling because somebody has just given him a garden for his monks and nuns to walk in he is in touch with that which is prior to all things we could call that if things are objects that arise in the field of consciousness then consciousness itself could best be described as space a sense of spaciousness or space in your life which doesn't exist as your life by just using language space consciousness which is not a term from science fiction but refers to the realization that space is the essence of who you are the spaciousness of simple being and your entire life experience is determined by whether or not and how much space there is in your life and for many humans on the planet there is no space it's not that the space isn't there it cannot be destroyed done away with but they don't know it's there all they know is the forms someone could say all they know is the dimension of waves and ripples on the surface of life that's the world experiences, events, sense perceptions drama, thoughts emotions, ripples ripples on the surface of life itself and I am life I am the one life I speak for each one of you as the I am that which I am is life itself it takes on a temporary form and it's beautiful it's a

continuous stepping back from seduction of things it's not that you reject things but you stay you can remain conscious of consciousness while you participate in the dance how does that look in practice? somebody comes says oh you know what just happened this and this and this in other words lost in things, the world of things and it matters each thing matters absolutely you know this okay and now there's the possibility either you get drawn into that and react on the same level and fuel that dimension what copy now what are we going to do now or you can be there while that person speaks you can be there as an alert aware presence in which the words are being received oh okay there's an alertness there you haven't gone to sleep but you're in fact much more awake than you would be if you were reacting you just oh that's well okay and for a moment there's a space there's a space in which this thing happens the person is talking and then you will find yourself saying something or doing something and it will be appropriate and while you say or do something there's still a connectedness with the underlying field it's a global thing it's the entire being a connectedness with the underlying field out of which the doing comes or out of which the words come speak much more intelligent certainly the words that come out of the field which really is the field of pure intelligence, consciousness itself will be much more relevant much more powerful much more intelligent than anything that could come out of the conditioned conditioned reactive mind and another thing that comes with it is there's always when you're in touch with the I am you could call it otherwise other words you can call it stillness, beingness, presence that is also the realm of peace that is the realm out of which peaceful peaceful action can come words, peaceful words, words that have the energy carry still a fragrance of that state of being action also can carry that fragrance creation, you can even create something out of that state like a work of art or whatever it may be a little simple object and whatever comes out of the state of connectedness with being and don't trust words, they're never quite right you're not connected with being because you are being but we have to use words out of that state of connectedness with being whatever comes out of that has a beauty to it, has a power to it has a quality and it may just be the quality of a simple gesture or the quality of a step or the it doesn't matter what it is so that's really the purpose of life while you are here in this form is to be in the two dimensions one could say, this is nothing final here the two dimensions of, there's the dimension of the world and there's the dimension of being or presence which is the unmanifested or other words that you may want to use and the art of living is to be in the world participate to the extent that you want to or is required of you and as the old expression goes to be in the world but not off it that's an old Christian expression so the world which is the world of things which includes thoughts because every thought is an object, it has a form, a thought form the world of things including your mind no longer has the power to draw you in completely and you no longer give it this absolute reality it is the world of the relative it helps greatly if you can become friendly with the present moment because being can only be realized of course in the present moment and the delusion is that something is happening in this moment that prevents me from being from being myself from being present still at peace in love it all goes together because

all love can only arise from that dimension the delusion that the present moment is some kind of obstacle to where I really want to go or be and that's a very common, it's so widespread that it dominates many people's lives entirely the delusion that the present moment is some kind of obstacle in my way they don't say that or don't think that but they live like that if you said it or thought it you would immediately say this must be insane but if that becomes your daily experience almost always that the present moment is okay where's the next thing because this isn't it, this can't be it but I'm looking for some for more, something more but not this the more could be anything could be the tiniest thing because life consists of a succession of the tiniest things the great things happen rarely and once they pass they're back to the tiny things so it's the tiniest things for example the belief that once your child has brushed his or her teeth it'll be okay and after then of course there's something else that's needed there's always the next thing that you need to get to in the unconscious belief because if you make it conscious you see the absurdity of it in the unconscious belief that there is something there for you in the next moment or the one after that and so the present moment or whatever is becomes a means to an end, no more the end is the next moment and what is the next moment, the future moment a thought in your head that's its only reality is that true? it must be true because nobody has ever touched or smelled or seen the future it's always only a thought in your head and so you live for a thought in your head that is the mind obsessed mind dominated mind possessed state could also be called egoic state because ego means to be totally identified with a mind made sense of self and every thought which many thoughts are about the next moment, the future every thought draws your attention in so completely that you identify with it and so identify means it becomes invested with a sense of self laughter that's the great illusion so you're looking for yourself somewhere in that realm because in some future moment there's a hope that things will be okay I can finally relax, of course it never comes because it's the future, it never comes so here becoming friendly with the present moment and stop treating it as an enemy laughter or run away from it or use it okay as a stepping stone you are here but you want to be there laughter laughter laughter you can look almost everybody on TV looks like that laughter it sounds almost too simple becoming friendly with the present moment and all kinds of things happen in the present moment the form that it takes changes continuously the present moment itself remains as space and then in that space something happens and the secret to life is to be internally aligned with the form that this moment the only moment there ever is takes instead of rejecting the form that this moment takes or devalue it and make it into a means to an end internally aligned means yes, you say yes to what is your child hasn't brushed his or her teeth yet that's what is why don't you brush your teeth now there is a different way of doing things or you tell me well you haven't experienced I have four children laughter there is another way of doing things that honors life which is now and only in honoring life in saying yes to the form that this moment takes can you go beyond that in yourself which is beyond form if you react against the form that this moment takes you will continue to be trapped in form a form identity, a me that feels stronger

every time it reacts against something, the me gets stronger in every no to what is every time you can argue with what is, you complain about what is, the little me, the mental formation feels stronger for a while and then you have to look for the next thing to argue with so the secret is the form that this moment takes often looks like a limitation on your freedom it may look like a limitation on your life one way or another you're sitting in an office but you don't want to be there you're in a traffic jam but you don't want to be there so that's a limitation your partner is getting obnoxious so that's a limitation there's always something that should I want to be free I want to be fully myself not this and that keeps you trapped it's only when you bring a yes to the form that this moment takes, that's to do with the manifested world, the world of manifestation is producing the form that this moment takes as an event a person wanting something whatever it may be, a situation, a place that's the form and you may say, what doesn't make sense, I don't want this but it is and whatever is, is part of the totality, the entire universe has brought about the form that this moment takes, otherwise it couldn't be everything is totally interconnected now you may not be able to see how these things are interconnected, why should I be stuck in this traffic jam right now does it make sense what is the purpose in that it shouldn't be yet it is and if you become internally aligned with the form which a moment ago looked like an obstacle but now you say, well it is it is there it is with that that space the dimension of space within yourself which is being opens up because you haven't made yourself smaller by reacting against the form you haven't trapped yourself in a form identity by reacting against some form that this moment takes so by saying yes to the form that is and in some cases it is truly from a conventional viewpoint one would say this is terrible how could this happen to a human being or to me how can this happen to me I don't, this is not what I want it's awful, it could be serious, an illness, whatever great loss collapse, somebody close to you dies goes away, leaves you forms are not reliable in this world, they are fleeting that includes the human form, even the seemingly solid structures are not really that solid, they just look solid, talk to a physicist he'll tell you they are not solid at all and sometimes you realize they are not solid, so suddenly something crumbles a form crumbles form and the formless and you cannot find the dimension of the formless as long as you are battling against the world of form I want freedom, I want to find myself and I can't find myself sitting in front of this computer screen, I can't find myself having to clean this right now, I want to be doing something meaningful, I want to you're missing something not something, you're missing that which is concealed underneath the form that this moment takes and that's easy to do and that's the great deception that most humans are subject to what they are looking for in some future moment is already here hiding in the most unlikely place called the present moment what what what is it that they're looking for, but all the people that are running around like rabbits or whatever in the cities there must be some purpose where are they all running to what is their purpose and they all have even if they want more money or they want more of this or more of that hiding behind that there's always they want to be more fully themselves, they want to feel a sense of security, of aliveness they want to be more fully who they are, they want to they're

looking for themselves, they're looking for an ultimate sense of being rootedness of saying, yes I have arrived I'm fully myself now secure and they are looking through this or that or that they try to get there not realizing that they can't it's been hiding all along underneath the seemingly unsatisfactory form that this moment takes so you come, it's a completely different way to live the alignment with the suchness of this moment it's only then that is the true meditation meditation you then space arises when the form is not resisted space a difficult situation, an unpleasant place, whatever it may be, somebody screaming this or that that's what is and then it's still there, but there is a dimension of depth to what is that frees you from being totally dependent on the world of form and from that space, it comes with allowing, allowing is the key allow this moment and suddenly space is there, because through saying yes to what is, immediately an inner spaciousness arises and out of that spaciousness action can come, out of that spaciousness words can come or out of that spaciousness nothing may come, it may just remain a spaciousness, which is beautiful too, very effective action can come out of that and out of that spaciousness comes the recognition that every life form that comes into your field of consciousness is really an aspect of the one life the temporary form that the one life the one consciousness that you are has taken and that recognition it's a flower, it's a tree it's a cloud, it's another human being, it's the cat it's a pebble, a stone a wall a chair whether we call it alive or inanimate, doesn't matter everything is alive and everything is a form of life and the essence is life itself beingness presence some great artists have looked at a relatively an ordinary landscape nobody would have looked at it twice and they looked and then they took up the brush and then there was a when the painting was finished yes it was a picture of that landscape but it also had the fragrance of that which is beyond form that was there as the backdrop the background to the sense perception of the artist there was a true looking against a field of alert, aware stillness then it became a painting and then even not immediately perhaps but at some point even humans who hadn't perhaps not perhaps almost completely trapped in form recognized something in that painting they couldn't quite say what and so it became what they call great art somebody was able to look at the world of form so deeply that the formless became part of the perception and that is not this is meant to be our normal state to bring that dimension into this world of form that which transcends the personal because everything that is personal about you is pertains to the world of form my past my thoughts my opinions my viewpoints of who I am who others are, what I know or think I know my story my future all form and it's all destined to dissolve fairly quickly as all forms do pop, boop salt bubbles oh where's, it's gone oh it can't be they don't, the amazing thing is they don't teach yet at school that forms dissolve quickly that could be lesson one and every child would see it oh yes they don't teach it they teach other things which they say are more important or are important matters it's to do with the world of things don't look for the significant in your life at some future moment when am I going to make it when am I going to be recognized when am I finally going to get that sense of security that can only come when you have a certain amount of money in the bank when is my story finally turning going to turn into a happy and satisfying one

I'm waiting waiting for my life to become significant and you miss the depth because the depth is in each moment or rather the one the only moment there is and your life becomes very significant when you bring the inner yes to the present moment then something arises in you that is beyond the form that perhaps looks as if it were an obstacle but it is the truth of this was expressed is expressed in mythologically in the image of the cross somebody surrenders to the most dreadful situation pain, suffering and somebody surrenders to that and so at first the cross is the greatest obstacle to finding yourself to being yourself to life it seems to deny that there is any meaning to life now the cross stands for anything loss, death and it will come into everybody's life of course and then there comes this this is the form this moment and suddenly there is a peace in the background that suddenly is there in the most dreadful situation, externally and so the cross becomes suddenly an opening that works with little things and certainly works with big things the actor who played superman died yesterday he experienced a dreadful accident broke his neck couldn't move anymore he also experienced a certain degree of surrender in the years after that even a certain peace one could see it became an opening and so they said something beautiful in the news he truly became superman only after the accident from a conventional view point it would be an irony in the film he flies and in reality he is confined to a wheelchair but the true superman is in the wheelchair he also said something they showed an interview he gave it one year ago he talked about the accident he said I was one when I was riding I was always completely one with the horse we were a oneness and he said but at that moment I got distracted by a thought and I lost the present moment and then the accident happened then he said you see how important the present moment is how important how precious the present moment is because it is life itself, it is inseparable from the very being that you are and knowing that is the art of living in this world remembering you are not what happens because people get so drawn into what happens you are not what happens and you are not what you do because that's what life consists of things happen to you that's the passive experience of life and then you react or you do things, that's the active and that's for most humans that's all there is they are dependent on what happens to them and on the doing, what they do so there's what happens, what's the next thing that's going to happen I'm hoping that it'll be good underneath the hope there's the fear that it'll be bad what happens and what you do are only relatively important, not absolutely absolutely important is whether you are aligned with life at this moment that is your purpose to live, to learn, to live in that way here on this earth as this temporary form is your purpose to learn that and what you do doesn't matter, the success of your life is not determined by what the world tells you is successful the world doesn't know it, the world is completely lost are you aligned with life with being with yourself, with the now it's all one and then what you do externally is secondary how you do it is what matters whether you six, seven, eight hours a day you move dishes or whatever you do then it flows into that, being flows into that, or if whatever you do seems incompatible with being, you will find yourself very quickly removed life removes you oh the boss calls you in and says we don't need you anymore we don't want peaceful people here oh he says you're the only

person not suffering from a stress related disease you're not doing your job some of the structures of this mad world can perhaps be transformed from within other structures of this mad world you simply leave or they collapse by themselves and there's wisdom is required for you to know but that's easy because wisdom is the place of wisdom is accessing the present moment alert still present and you watch and you listen you watch and listen even if there's nothing to listen to as one Zen master would often call his disciples by their name Mary yes master nothing John yes nothing to simply call them out of identification with the stream of thinking into presence into stillness into alert awareness you don't have to fill it with something it's space itself so he called them into that state and there was nothing he didn't have to put anything into it why fill it up ha ha ha ha ha there'll be enough things that will go into space there are all kinds of things will go oh but you don't have to hang on so much anymore you can enter your space space not yours you are space so it's not your space things things enter space and then they leave okay experiences events people and you remain as space the background so the foreground is the world the foreground is the world of things the world of thinking the world of emotions coming going that's the foreground of your life that most people are completely lost in and then there's the background the Buddha's smile is I would call the background smile this was expressed in an extreme form by the teacher Krishnamurti who once said in a talk do you want to know my secret and of course everybody wanted to know his secret they'd been coming for 30 years to listen to him and he said this is it my secret I don't mind what happens I don't know how many people got it amazing now of course we understand what that means now I don't mind what happens I'm not what happens and I'm not looking for myself in what happens I am not what happens nor am I looking for myself in what happens I am the space in which it happens not what happens I am presence I am consciousness I am life temporarily appearing as a form of life so the dance of the forms of life is actually quite beautiful when you don't mind what happens anymore because you welcome what happens because what happens is the present moment and it's not serious thank you you

[Speaker 6] (3:37:14 - 3:37:18)

music music

[Speaker 3] (3:37:26 - 3:37:27)

music music

[Speaker 6] (3:37:42 - 3:37:42)

music music music music music music music music music music music

[Speaker 1] (3:39:21 - 4:06:14)

welcome to this gathering we are running a little late which is in the timeless dimension

irrelevant and in time it matters if you were getting impatient restless if the mind started to say things like what's going on why is it taking so long that means you are carrying time inside the more time psychological time you carry inside the more stressful life is it seems to be it seems to be it seems to be that time is what we'll talk about for a little while now I had that feeling when I realized we would be starting quite late so there's something to do with time here and this was confirmed when half an hour ago I was sitting in the green room and I received a beautiful gift from someone, thank you very much of a tub of anti-aging cream laughter laughter and then I knew for sure that we have to talk about time laughter and of course I will apply the cream laughter laughter and see what happens laughter and of course for most people time is the most powerful factor in their lives and nobody could deny the reality of time because even for words to come out of this mouth requires time and we are going to spend time here how much I don't know we'll see we'll spend an hour and a half, two hours three hours, who knows here and from a conventional viewpoint this is a correct statement we are going to spend this amount of time here here if you look more closely all we ever spend if you can even use that word, is the present moment here so in your immediate experience there's always only the present moment so it is not in absolute terms, it is not true to say that we are going to spend two hours here in conventional terms yes in absolute terms the only reality that these so called two hours have is as a thought in our heads where we call that an hour, two hours apart from the thought in our head future and past have no existence and this is an amazing realization not just to be understood intellectually but to realize in the depth of your being that your life I've never said that before by the way, that your life is always now your life is always now, never not now, what we call past and future the only reality is they are thought forms in the human mind in your experience in your immediate experience they cannot exist, they do not exist, there is no past and future all you can know about past and future, about the passing of time is what time does to things you remember when you look in the mirror I'm saying this inspired by the anti-aging cream you look in your mirror in the bathroom and then you get a photo of yourself 20 years ago and you compare them and then you can say, oh time did that time did that to me so time is a little bit like a criminal leaves evidence everywhere wherever you look you can see well, yes, time evidence that time seems to exist is everywhere, not just the bathroom mirror, everywhere and yet you can never catch the criminal just very elusive so in your immediate experience there is no such thing as past and future in your immediate experience there is only now only in the mind the human mind, which is the movement of thought there time has its existence and the more you are identified with the movement of thinking the more important time is for you and collectively, of course, time has never been more important to humans than in our civilization this present civilization everybody almost everybody is stressed everybody says there's not enough time everybody lives always towards the next thing the next moment the next day the next hour always living towards that this is so deeply ingrained that people don't even realize it anymore we are gathered here tonight in order to realize, of course many of you already are realizing that that there is another dimension

in every human being that we could call the timeless dimension and for most people on the planet it doesn't exist, they don't know that that is there and that it would free them if they could only be conscious of that dimension within, it would free them of an enormous amount of suffering unhappiness discontent that is there when your state of consciousness is completely dominated by time past and future so a word for this, the realization of the timeless dimension of consciousness a word that we could use for this realization is the word awakening you awaken out of identification with this continuous stream of thoughts that produces what we call time this is why we are here we are not denying that we still need to handle time in our everyday life on a practical level to make an appointment and so on that's fine but we do not need to be dominated by time psychologically we are here in order to deepen or accelerate the awakening that is already happening in almost every one of you that is sitting here because it is that which has brought you here if you were not awakening already to the timeless dimension of consciousness in yourself you would find it very frustrating to be sitting here and gradually the frustration would build up the impatience the restlessness of the mind that would be saying what is he talking about I have no, I don't understand it doesn't make sense what is he talking about he has been talking for 15 minutes and I don't know what he is saying he has not given me information, he hasn't told me something new, yes at the present moment he already said that 5 years ago, there is only the now I came for something new to take home so some new bit can add to myself what is the next thing he is going to say ah, there it is so if you can be sitting here and enjoying being here somehow, you don't know why you enjoy being here and sitting here, but somehow it feels there is a rightness to it and there is almost a recognition of all these words that you hear are simply confirming what deep down you already know and the words of course in themselves are not all that important, they are merely little signposts that point beyond themselves they are not explanations it's not philosophy nothing even, a complete explanation of the universe wouldn't help you if you cannot awaken out of the time bound state of consciousness so all this is the words are there on the surface the words are not the essence of this gathering, the essence of this gathering is within you it is within you and it emerges that is, as you sit there in a state of simple receptiveness or presence you simply hear, just as I sit here in the simple state of presence and out of that the words come so the words appear in your consciousness in the space of your consciousness and if you can sit here and be aware I'm giving you already when you learn public speaking they say don't tell them the important things until the end but I'm telling you the important things now in case you have something more important to go to so then you can go this is also a very useful little hint in case you decide to stay for the rest of our evening here and this is a very unusual thing to do mostly you would be focused on the words and there would be a mental commentary that accompanies the words where you compare what the words are saying with your own opinions or your own knowledge or your own beliefs and you say yeah that's true, no I don't quite agree with that oh that's rubbish that would be the normal way of listening to a talk so your attention is on the words that kind of attention has a grasping quality to it sometimes

you can see it in people's faces when they're at a lecture, hopefully not here they go it's like a little animal waiting to pounce on something now what they pounce on may be something that they agree with like yeah that's it or they pounce on something like that's completely wrong and then of course when something like that happens in a normal talk then your mind is so active that for ten minutes you don't even hear what the speaker is saying because you don't so that's a normal state of consciousness so when you go to all universities and so on, they're either in that state of consciousness the pouncing state or they're half asleep so is there another way of listening to a talk there is and this is my suggestion to you to make this your presence here more meaningful and that is yes to be aware of the words but also to be aware of, now we need to be very careful with words also to be aware of that which makes the perception of the words possible use slightly different words, another little sign I suppose but also to be aware of your own awareness with which these words or the sensory perception of the words is being received so there are two ingredients as you sit here of this moment one is the words that flow one after another this rule they come, and of course in time, they need time to come out of this mouth that's one level and that's for most people that's all that ever exists is that level of reality then there is a hidden concealed level of reality that for most people does not exist they are not aware of it and that is a deeper dimension you could say your very presence the very presence that you are as consciousness that is the space for these words in which they appear so you are the space for whatever perception happens so as you sit here you are aware of the words and what I'm saying now, there's no point in even trying to think about what that means, you either realize it directly, or you don't you're not only aware of the words you're also aware of yourself as the underlying awareness and that is not something that you can be aware of as if it were an object in your consciousness and say, ah, there it is a word which is a verbalized spoken thought is an object in consciousness one object, everything that you perceive and even thoughts have a form they are thought forms and forms come and go they come and go arise and dissolve and then there is that without which none of this would be and that is the simple your simple presence here the presence the conscious presence that you are is it possible for you as you sit here to be aware of yourself as the conscious space as well as of that which happens which here happen to be the words so you sit here and there is the background to what you perceive is an inner spaciousness and that's an amazing thing this is what they've been what all the spiritual seekers look for and traditionally they haven't found they don't find it, that's why they're called seekers because they are looking for it as if it could be grasped by this pouncing consciousness where is it? where is the enlightenment that I am looking for I'm looking for it it's going to happen to me one day and you've already made it into time and future as if something could happen in your life and suddenly reveal to you your own reality in some future moment so the simplicity of the realization is to see immediately at first hand that dimension in you that is, has nothing to do with time because that is the consciousness that you are the awareness that you are to feel to sense your own no words are absolutely correct so don't argue with the words, please

just a signpost they may not be the greatest signpost but they are signposts and there's no point in saying I don't like the color of this signpost I don't like the way the letters are written, doesn't matter it points somewhere that's what matters so can you sense your own presence as you sit here which pervades by the way your entire energy field your own presence is not just a head phenomenon it pervades the entire body but it is not the body it is deeper than the body so as you sit here it is very helpful if you can feel an increased or intensified and it may happen to quite a few of you even without me saying it to experience an intensified sense of aliveness throughout your entire body you can hardly say what exactly it is but it just feels that every cell is alive there's a field, an energy field that pervades the entire body there's a presence here that is the doorway into that dimension of yourself that is formless and also timeless if you cannot find that dimension in your life then you live you are condemned to continuous almost continuous frustration because all you have is the world all you have is your thoughts plus the world out there and that is very frustrating there is no fulfillment there is no lasting satisfaction, there is no happiness if you are trapped only in the surface dimension of life and of course all the media they all tell you yes you can find ultimate satisfaction but they are all unhappy everybody is like hypnotized by the world of form, the dimension of form and formless or timeless or eternal which is another word for timeless, for most people it's just an empty it's just a mental concept if you go to theology they might use the word eternity but it's like people talking about honey writing a PhD about honey but they never tasted it so it's just concepts but the amazing realization is eternity is an actual presence, it is the only true presence, it is presence itself and eternity is the essence of who you are it's not some theological concept this is what it has become but it is something absolutely real infinitely more real than the world of form which is subject to time in which everything is going to be devoured and is already in the process of being devoured by time this monster everything goes the flowers, if you sit here for long enough you'll see the flowers go

[Speaker 6] (4:06:15 - 4:06:16)

gone

[Speaker 1] (4:06:17 - 5:16:29)

and then if you could sit here for long enough to watch the speaker or let's just speed it up although of course it's going to slow down a little because of the anti-aging cream but if you could sit here for long enough you would see the speaker getting being devoured by time and suddenly the body collapses and then if you stand a little longer suddenly it becomes dust and then all is left of the speaker is a little pile of dust and then a gust of wind comes and it's gone phew everything here is subject to of course the famous Buddhist word impermanence, the fleetingness of everything very fleeting it is time and this is one reason why it is frustrating if there is nothing if there is no other dimension in your life life is a succession of frustrations and many of you have experienced that and

that's why you're here and now to get out of that is not to find some new something new to believe in some new theory which says yes but ultimately you are eternal and you just have to believe that no you don't have to believe anything you go deeper in fact the more you can let go of belief because what is belief except to have a succession of thoughts and say this is reality this is the truth but it's a bundle of thoughts and somebody else has a different bundle of thoughts and says oh no you're wrong and then you start fighting it's called religion and then but the amazing thing deep down in the most religions you have a core where there was once the truth sometimes spoken by the founder and then progressively misunderstood progressively misinterpreted more and more progressively it became thought but at the beginning of the great religions there was this simple message which some people some one person said the kingdom of heaven if you do not find that dimension then you live in unhappiness or somebody else said it was the Buddha if that's what he said the deathless realm Amaravati the deathless realm he also points to the dimension that is at the core of every human being only waiting to be discovered realized covered up in many humans when that dimension is covered up and please remember as you sit here be aware of your presence as an entire field of consciousness as well as the words your presence is more fulfilling more alive more deeply fulfilling than these words could ever be if you don't even have a glimpse of your own presence as you sit there the simple fact of the awareness that you are you can't catch it it's just there no form that is so much more fulfilling than these words could ever be without that awareness of awareness the words are silly if you cannot if you don't have the words plus the that to which the words point if you don't have that then all you have is the words and then you are like the person the reviewer of the power of now for time magazine time said what was the expression he used mumbo jumbo something like that didn't make sense there was nothing inside well it was there but it was covered up that could respond to the words so the words are here to pull out not just the words but also the presence of the speaker which is no different from your presence and so there is a meeting and there is an energy field in the room of presence that makes it easier to stay in that state and if the speaker stopped speaking it wouldn't matter very much in fact some of you who are already deeply connected with this presence that you are perhaps would even wish that the speaker would stop speaking wouldn't it be so much better if he would shut up and if that's what you are thinking you are right it would be the only reason why the speaker continues to speak is that there is still some of you, I don't know how many who would be very frustrated and would run out of the room so we'll keep you here through the words and continuously as you listen sense that presence that you are we could call that also of course a stillness within just another pointer it is the dimension of stillness now what is stillness stillness is the inner equivalent of silence outside and what is silence outside, silence is the absence of noise that's defining it in negative terms silence is the absence of noise and then if silence is the absence of noise stillness, what is this inner, the stillness is of course the absence of the movement of thinking this is again defining it in negative terms but stillness is more than just the absence of thoughts stillness is the very essence of who you are because

stillness is consciousness itself before it becomes something before it becomes a thought before it becomes an emotion before it becomes a sense perception this the unconditioned dimension of consciousness, the essence of who you are, in which your past is totally irrelevant, it doesn't even exist on that level, whatever is in your past whether it's you achieved the greatest things or your life is the greatest mess that one could possibly imagine, you've messed up your whole thing and for some people for many people it's in between those two extremes, it becomes irrelevant so who you are where do you derive your sense of self from, your sense of identity of who you are, and most people poor wretches they derive their sense of identity from their past and what is past, we saw that earlier in the past a bundle of thoughts so who you are is infinitely more real in the dimension of presence than in the dimension of past so to realize this timeless dimension in yourself where you no longer need reference to your life story to explain and define through your mind who you are and most people of course still live like that and that's a dreadful prison that you are trapped in mind made prison you derive your sense of identity from your past which is a bundle of thoughts that's me and then of course this identity, this me this time made conditioned, time bound me is an unsatisfied entity because the past hasn't fulfilled me yet, it has not yet allowed me to truly be who I can be and want to be and maybe one day will be so I need the future to get to me to get to the fullness of me eventually just give me enough time and I will find myself and I will complete the unhappy story of me and so everybody then is running towards that in order to complete the story which in the best of cases is ambivalent not quite sure it wasn't that there's quite a few things went wrong in my past or maybe one or two great achievements and then I'd have to remember that all the time, okay I got the gold medal in this 25 years ago I got the gold and you look at it, that is just one example or even to say I wrote this great book, The Power of Now I have to remember I have to look at it to remind myself that I wrote that and then oh I feel bitter about myself now and there may be some of you who perhaps are dreaming of writing something like that and say well then my life would really be sorted out everything, I would have arrived recognition everybody loves me and then whatever imagined situation that the mind made self imagined it would complete this would complete me fulfill me when you actually arrive there then you realize that every situation that you arrive at or every condition that arises in your life has a new very unusual that you didn't know before, a new set of frustrations around it so before you thought okay fame is going to finally make me happy and when you reach fame you realize it's not that great in fact I'd rather not have it but now you're stuck with it and it has its own limitations the same with anything any condition that the mind imagines when I reach it, the great big house one day finally I will complete myself in a big mansion and then I can sit in it and look around and say I made it I made it and that only works if you invite others who have not quite as much as you and they will come and admire your place and then you go well this thing, well 50,000 bucks for that thing there you are somebody you are somebody now and then the people go home and then you sit there again in your big house and then you go to sleep and in the middle of the night you wake up and then the heart is beating where

does that fear come from there's something missing I have to plan another dinner party whatever new situation it will not be the fulfillment of your story there will be and of course those of you who know Buddhism around you will recognize very clearly this is what the Buddha said in slightly different words wherever you go whatever you do, whatever condition arises in your life you are going to find dukkha, which is translated as unhappiness or misery or unsatisfactoriness or not enough and that's an amazing realization 2,600 years ago he saw that already in the human condition you are condemned to continuous dukkha unsatisfactoriness, misery unhappiness, frustration and if you look around that's the world and what that state of consciousness manifests collectively of course is dreadful if you look at human history, especially recent history, but any history dreadful insanity why is human history so insane because it was produced by people who are mentally sick because insanity is a vital part of the collective human state of consciousness and this is why human history, 85% of it, 90% I don't know is mad just read it I always recommend the 20th century because that's just the height of madness or if you don't like history books watching the news on TV is enough every evening you see this is mad and of course it's produced by the human conditioned mind by that state of consciousness that is totally unbalanced why is it unbalanced because it only knows let's just put it like this for a moment it only knows one half of reality which is the world of form it does not know the dimension of depth the dimension of the timeless the dimension of stillness it doesn't know that if it knew that it would be healed it would be balanced and it would manifest and create a very different world from what we have known since recorded history a very different world but we cannot wait of course, a mistake would be to say okay, let's wait for the new world to come, it's going to come it's not going to come if it is not arising through the realization at this very moment of the essence of who you are the simple essence of who you are so once that is there you can bring the art then the art of living then is to continuously live in the two dimensions yes you are still, you are active and you are doing whatever you have to do in this world but in every situation in the background you are in touch with and now what we call that I can give you a choice of signposts choose the one that works for you in any situation you are in touch at the same time with in the background dimension, the dimension of stillness you are in touch with the awareness that you are, you feel you sense your own presence even while you listen to somebody you sense your presence the presence of consciousness the presence of presence you sense that as yourself you are and presence cannot be defined further, you cannot say presence ok, what does presence consist of? this is the question of the human mind that is saying please analyze it of course what the human mind does it cuts in order to understand things, it dissects things, it cuts them up it analyzes it cuts them up into little pieces now you can do that with a flower although of course you miss the essence of the flower but you can learn a great deal about the flower if you start cutting it up and putting it under a microscope you learn a lot about the flower except the essence of the flower because the essence of the flower is one with the essence of who you are and that essence is formless it is it cannot be defined through the mind it can only be known directly as the

simple realization of your presence of presence I say your presence it's not quite right to put it like that but temporarily I'm saying your it is not yours it is universal presence manifesting through you ultimately the whole personal thing is part of the surface dimension where you feel you have a separate identity as a separate person but that's only in the dimension of time, it's short lived what's going to happen to this person with its history of course we all know what's going to happen to this person and the history it's going to suddenly one day go pop where is he he passed away when? yesterday but yesterday he was still sitting in this chair he's gone yeah popped soap bubble, like a soap bubble they go, they look so real and then suddenly it goes a little drop of water dissolves it's gone it looked, everything looks so real here it looks so real this is why people take everything so seriously because the dimension of depth is missing and if the dimension of depth is missing everything in the surface dimension is deadly serious my life is very serious I have to think about it especially at four in the morning what am I going to do with my life what am I going to do with my life I've messed it all up, it's too late now yeah but you achieved some great things, yeah that's true deriving your identity from the stream of thinking and then you suddenly have a good thought about yourself and then it gets cancelled out by a bad thought and then you need to ask others to get some kind of reflection of who you are what do you think of me what do you think of my life let me tell you about my life it's a sad story and if you're lucky you find somebody who confirms to you that yes it is indeed very sad and yes you have a right to be unhappy they missed that one in the declaration of human rights the right to be unhappy but and of course if this dimension is all you know unhappiness is guaranteed and stress is guaranteed and the heaviness of life is guaranteed and that eventually it's not going to get any better is guaranteed because if it does get better it's only temporary time will make sure that even if your so called life does get better it's only temporary because then it will get worse again and then you go and so that's the reality of your existence unredeemed existence unconscious existence and then there's the possibility of awakening and awakening at first comes perhaps for most people in glimpses for a moment the mind is not saying anything and of course a moment later the mind says oh I'm not thinking I'm not thinking but even as for some of you as you sit here is it possible for you to sit here and simply surrender the compulsion or the erroneous belief that you need to think continuously a deeply ingrained belief an unconscious belief it's very rarely formulated the way I formulate it now but if you formulate it it says never stop thinking which by the way is the advertising slogan of the Globe and Mail I believe never stop thinking I'd like to get a photo of myself standing in front of that billboard and I will look tortured because if you never stop thinking it means you are possessed by your mind you are possessed your mind has become a virtual autonomous entity that has taken possession of you and it lives up here it's almost like science fiction something from science fiction it has come into you and taken hold of you and this has been going on for so long that you don't even know it you are it you believe you are it and every thought that arises you are completely in the thought you are identified with it and you pronounce judgments upon situations and people and yourself

and your life and somebody else's life and what they did and shouldn't have done but did to and the continuous commentary on whatever is happening in your life it's immediately commented upon by this entity it knows immediately complete absence of space inner space you are completely in the grip of this thing which never stops talking and this is who you feel I am that's me a dreadful condition it's normal and of course this is why I always say normal equals insane the normal world has produced normal human history and it is insane so there you have that thing and the first glimpse of a realization comes when you realize that you have a voice in here that never stops speaking oh it's talking king there comes the beginning of freedom because now the total identification with the voice is no longer there not a hundred percent you realize there is a thing that is the conditioned mind that is the voice in the head and I say the voice you can split that voice up into a number of voices which sometimes argue with each other psychologists know about that so you get to many people have this the voice in the head for many people splits up into several voices and they are often antagonistic towards each other one says oh well I can't help it I'm always and the other yes you never achieve anything yeah but I try I do my best but it just but basically it's the voice and it's the voice that talks when somebody gives their opinion and then suddenly oh you're wrong you're completely let me tell you how it is I've studied this matter I know more than you the voice is talking it's asserting it's existence it's exerting itself it needs to be right to be wrong for the mind made self that voice is death so you get enormous amount of emotional suffering that goes with asserting people asserting their mental positions and it talks it's conditioned by the past by your past the cultural past of your country and your family background and your personal history that's a little that's the entity and gradually the ability to realize that there is a voice arises and then the voice loses it's power over you it no longer totally runs your life and that's the beginning of awakening because what you awaken out of is identification with the continuous stream of thinking it never stops never stops and here we awaken out of that so for many people the first awakening is the realization that there is a voice where does that come from that comes from the arising awareness in the background that is the spaciousness and only from that spaciousness can you see that which is not spacious the spaciousness contains that it is the space for that it is the awareness it is the stillness it is that in you which cannot be defined further it can only be known directly it cannot be cut up into little segments because it has no form but it is the essence of who you are so when you are in you know yourself as the space so you are not what happens the thoughts that arise the sense perceptions that arise in your life all those things that happen continuously you are no longer looking for some kind of self confirmation in what happens and you because you already know the essence directly you know it directly in yourself as that and that means wonderful liberation comes with that and that is you don't have gradually you lose opinions about yourself and the need to define your life through further thought goes and with that comes an enormous freedom you no longer compulsively define through continuous mental thinking and judgment who you are and once you become free of always needing to pronounce judgment upon yourself good or bad you are still trapped

in judgment good is better than bad but you can't have just good then it turns into bad you can go on and say here I am the greatest I am the best I am the best and one night you wake up and say maybe I am not the best I am the worst I am the worst because you lived only in one polarity then the other got bigger and bigger and suddenly the other polarity any mental thing you have about yourself that you try to be, I am spiritual very spiritual more and more spiritual than most people no I am certainly more spiritual than that guy here and what about him oh no so you have a self image which is again thought based and you compare yourself continuously to others and of course depending where you what kind of comparison you use you always find people who are better than you in one way or another and then you find others who are worse than you in one way or another it's an absurd way to live only to get some sometimes some satisfaction because somebody else is not as good as you at least in your opinion and then the next day to experience the opposite because somebody obviously is better looking than you or has more money than you or has more power and influence than you or is more famous than you or is more spiritual than you all based on thought the entire self based on thought that is the freedom of going beyond that so that you don't need self definitions anymore and opinions about yourself gradually dissolve and then simply you are neither good nor bad neither spiritual or unspiritual you are the simple in any moment in any situation you are the space for whatever is happening here you are the conscious presence not you don't carry the baggage of my personal story and my personal history and then look at the world through all that baggage the veil you see clearly you don't need to and once you no longer define yourself compulsively mentally you no longer need to define everybody you meet compulsively you can allow another human being to be you no longer compare and say he is less than me I am more than he, whatever it's absurd you simply there for the first time a true relationship is possible when the judgments of the mind the compulsive definitions of the mind are no longer operating or in the intermediate stage as you are awakening at least you no longer completely believe in what your mind is saying you recognize it as a thought a judgment conditioned by your past and you recognize it there goes another judgment and you no longer completely believe in every thought that arises and that's wonderful, all that is freedom all that is the arising of the unconditioned, everything else is conditioned the compulsion to judge others what a freedom, what a gift to give to another human being this gift is the gift of not imposing definitions or judgments on another but simply be there as a conscious presence in any human interaction you are a conscious presence, a space of consciousness the same applies to situations the egoic self the mind made self also compulsively interprets every situation this shouldn't be happening but it is yeah but it shouldn't but it's there ok it's a why don't they he should know better yeah but he doesn't they should, why don't they well they don't the disagreement with reality that the conditioned mind has disappears and then arises an incredible thing it is an inner oneness with life and then you see that in the old unconscious state you are never aligned with life, you are always out of alignment because the mind is there and life is here and you miss life continuously, you are not actually alive because life is here and

now and the mind is there and then life is continuously happening here but I am somewhere else and at the best of times what I do is I argue with what's happening here and that is deeply ingrained this arguing with what is and the mind doesn't realize that that whatever is, is already the case so to have any kind of inner disagreement with the reality of this moment is the state of being out of alignment with the totality of life then the totality of life, the greater the one intelligence that underlies all life, which is consciousness itself that consciousness cannot then fully express itself through this form only little trickles come through this form you have enough consciousness to formulate thoughts just little trickles but the fullness of consciousness cannot flow through you when you are out of alignment with life it's only when you bring yourself into alignment with life so out of alignment means you argue with what is you have inner resistance to what is you are always running to some other moment but always never this one is never quite right except when you are half asleep because you don't have the energy to argue anymore but that's not the way we are going so you realize the fullness of life you've missed it always and then you bring your conscious state consciousness into alignment with now and suddenly an enormous power flows through you which is the power of now which is the power of life itself which is the power of unconditioned consciousness and if I were a religious teacher I might even use the word God but I don't want to use words that have too much baggage attached to them and have been too misinterpreted by the human mind you are then you come into alignment with the one power there is the one life and then the one life can express itself through you even through your mind it can even use your mind and you may suddenly find that quite a few thoughts that you have are original thoughts and then you say them and say people wow that's interesting and so or whatever it is creativity suddenly comes in because the old has gone the old, the conditioned is no longer running your life you become one with life itself and then infinite possibilities open up of creation of creativity of being a powerful good in this world, a good that is deeper than the good on the surface of life which is the opposite of bad there is good and bad on the surface of life but in the dimension of the timeless there is only a timeless good which actually includes the opposites that can only be realized within and there is a new way to live life another way of putting it is you are surrendered to life one with life you no longer argue with the is-ness of things, so the entry point is not to resist whatever form this moment takes no, do not offer internal resistance through arguing through thinking through pronouncing judgments through emotional contraction some people have lived in that state for most of their adult life and you can see it they are always in a state of dissatisfaction just waiting for the next thing to complain about and this is why the complaining voice which for many people is very big and a very important part of the egos the false mind made self attempt to sustain itself is lodged for many people in continuous or almost continuous complaining so it's interesting when you can catch the voice when you are complaining about people situations things, whatever places anything, give me anything and I will complain about it you go to the most beautiful place on holiday you'll find something to complain about if only that it's too short, it's time to go home soon should we should acceptance of this

moment and immediately something opens up that is deeper than the form of this moment for most people the form of this moment which is their life situation at this moment where they are, the work they are doing where they live, who they live with the conditions of their life the state of health of their body for many people the form of this moment represents what they consider to be an obstacle an obstacle a hindrance a hindrance to full a full life so, their work their partner or their family even their house where they live their financial situation, their health situation the country they live in whatever you can find anything, the climate if you want to complain you have plenty to complain about when it rains in the winter here but whatever it is always is regarded the form of this moment and this is deeply ingrained, you have to see it to go beyond it, you have to first see that this is a conditioned, collective form of conditioning to regard your life where you are, what you are doing and so on, as a hindrance to the fullness of life and that is a deep misperception a deep error and as long as you regard and react to the form of this moment as if it were a hindrance or an obstacle you remain precisely trapped in that form and what you then project becomes true for you and then if you believe that this moment the form of this moment is keeping me back from living fully then that becomes true for you but it is not the truth the forms of this moment need to be transcended, they are not here to make you happy they are here to take you to the inner state of transcendence and then you move beyond but first, they need to be transcended within how do you transcend a state of health that is unsatisfactory how do you transcend a living situation that is unsatisfactory or a work situation that is unsatisfactory how do you transcend that, you transcend it by taking your attention into the present moment only and saying, this moment this is what is this is the chair I'm sitting on this is a window there is a wall yes, it may not look right but this is what is the light is coming through the window I'm breathing and you become friendly even a body you say, ok, this leg isn't working anymore or here there is a pain or here there is that, this is what is you become friendly with whatever is that's what is one can argue with that it is even an emotion you say, ok, I feel sad ok, then feel sad it's what is you become, by accepting what is you become bigger than what is how does that work by accepting the present moment, only the present moment and not a story about the present moment but the present moment what do I mean by story about the present moment if you run out of money except that my pockets are empty and my bank account is empty or oh, you look zero or nothing that's what is pockets empty, bank account is empty I may have to do some take some action but in the meantime that's what is no story the story would be you failed all the past ten years, all the struggle for nothing look, this is what you've ended up with empty, nothing to show for all the work you've done in ten years all in vain, what's the point of it all and of course, as you know, the story goes on and on you can't, so that you can't, this is not accepting to say I'm miserably poor and I'm a failure and I might as well accept that I'm a failure and poor no this is mistaking a story for acceptance acceptance means to have no story around the simple reality of the present moment and then it becomes beautiful because then you sit on a park bench, perhaps even without a home and you say oh you don't have a story

about it this moment is actually not bad and you don't even need to say that you sense that this moment isn't bad because it's beautiful and there is an aliveness in you that is deeper, you could even be in a prison cell, let's say park benches are still relatively nice places let's even if you have no money or no home, let's put you in a prison and perhaps you haven't even done anything, perhaps even wrongly imprisoned, even worse and there you sit and you would be amazed if you let go of the stories around the present moment what remains is the simple reality of this moment the sense perceptions around you and if you accept the form no matter how limiting it seems in the moment of completely accepting the form the formless dimension deep within becomes accessible to you it reveals itself in other words by accepting the form no matter how limiting it may seem this is what is, that is this is what acceptance means it is one with what is and suddenly that which before you regarded as an obstacle or hindrance becomes an opening but the opening is within the opening is the realization of space of yourself as the underlying space for this and then you become free even in the present cell and then even if you're sitting on a park bench, I can talk more about park bench because I've experienced that I haven't experienced prison yet, you never know who knows, my next talk in the states, homeland security may suddenly get me dangerous transformation of consciousness through saying yes to what is and not arguing with it and not fighting it the depths that you are opens up and you feel there is suddenly spaciousness is there and so you sit in your present cell and you feel what I at the beginning I described as the awareness of awareness or the consciousness of consciousness, you feel the presence that you are beyond the form that you temporarily also are, you feel the formless presence even in the midst of an unsatisfying form and of course forms are always unsatisfying, even for a little while they may be satisfying this chocolate is really satisfying me but you eat more and more and suddenly you switch, it switches over and the chocolate will make you sick and you eat more and more because the mind remembers oh it makes me feel good and you have forgotten oh it makes me feel sick so the forms always turn into, turn around there is no satisfaction and only when you don't need the external forms which includes everything situations, people places even good health when you no longer need this to feel who you are to give you an identity to give you the sense of aliveness, then you can actually enjoy the forms of this life until then you desperately need this or that and of course it's never enough the world is frustrating and not satisfying, the forms are actually mostly problematic, you don't enjoy them, even if you buy something big it becomes a problem, you buy the big house and with the big house come big problems, you have to start thinking about that you can't enjoy you can only enjoy when the freedom is there from needing these forms then you can enjoy whatever form is there this flower the light the air in the room the people, beautiful beautiful and when the people go maybe everybody suddenly says this is all rubbish, goodbye I can still sit here suddenly alone it's good to be here that's the simplicity of realization simplicity of being being present in the only place there is the only place where life can be found is here and now, the doorway is in whatever is here and now is not this is a shift now from regarding the here and now as a hindrance which is normal to

realizing that the here and now is actually a hidden doorway into presence or into being by simply becoming friendly with it by simply dropping your silly stories about it and seeing the simplicity of this moment without the story just this so when things don't go as they should which is often the case you get stuck in a line up for a ticket it's what is without the story there's no suffering, there's no unhappiness it just is I read an account of in some older civilizations that have not gone quite as mad as this one some people have that still naturally being one with life there's less unhappiness I read some early accounts of westerners going into North America and they observed how the native people when they had to line up for this or that to get some goods or medical treatment or some official document, there were westerners waiting in line and there were a few Indians waiting in line I saw some, read some accounts and they were amazed when they observed that the native people they just stood or sat there they could be there for hours they weren't complaining or impatient they were just there sitting or standing and the westerners they were going, oh for God's sake why don't you stop complaining and the natives were just two hours, three hours four hours and even if they say come back tomorrow okay any place is a good place because you're always somewhere it doesn't really matter where you stand, sit or lie I think I can sit here, I can sit in a car or I can stand somewhere what does it matter ultimately you're always somewhere it's all delusion of the mind say I need to be there but you're here, you need to be exactly where you are at this moment because where you are at this moment is part of the totality of the universe, of life you're not separate it's not here's me and there's the universe you're totally one with the totality it's like a web and that any situation whatever form it takes is as it is because that's the universe produces the situation that's all so it's useful to realize wherever you are is the right place for you and of course it doesn't mean let's say okay I'm not going to move now I gave the example in a book Power of Now I believe let's say you're suddenly you're walking and you suddenly get stuck in the mud up to your knees or more okay well the first thing is to say I'm stuck in the mud there it is and then of course you take action the action you take once you have surrendered first is going to always be much more effective than the action that arises out of a struggle against life so that is to remember any action you take first of all have you accepted this moment you have to be clear, you have to really be alert to see am I creating any kind of resistance or is the space clear cut through okay this is as it is and then action comes a lot of action comes intuitively and spontaneously out of the state of presence even words sometimes because sometimes action means you have to say something and if you say something because the situation may need changing, you maybe need somewhere to have to say something whatever the soup is cold, my room is dirty in a hotel hasn't been cleaned, there are cockroaches everywhere, please get me another room but have you first of all said this is what is then if you speak it is clear there is no accusation about it and there is a clear communication you say what you have to say that means you are not creating resistance in the other so no struggle but effective action never against you are never fighting a situation or a person this is never truly effective always produces more suffering and more opposition no fighting situations

not fighting people aligned with what is and then act uncontaminated by negativity clear and sometimes there is nothing you can do fine it is what is you are free you are free of dependency on external conditions beautiful that is the state of liberation liberation or freedom is free of the conditioned mind which reacts, which complains which fights against simple, this is the simplicity of awakening simplicity of how life could be how life can be how life has to become for humanity now if we are not going to create even more havoc on the planet even more havoc than the insane human mind has created already this transformation of consciousness is at the essence of the complete transformation also of all the dreadful things we have done on this planet they arise out of a diseased state of consciousness and this is what is happening now and this is the Lada context for our gathering here is the transformation of human consciousness that is not going to happen but is happening already here and now in you otherwise you would not be sitting here anymore it is happening already and it is up to you now to live it and many times you may fail the old consciousness may assert itself again and again you start complaining with reality against reality the entity in your head possesses you again and then suddenly you go

[Speaker 6] (5:16:29 - 5:16:30)

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[Speaker 1] (5:16:33 - 5:20:21)

and the alertness is back the alertness of presence back and you go back to sleep you wake up again so many of you are already experiencing the falling back into mind identification and then waking up again falling back, waking up that's fine for a while and then you realize gradually the awareness the level of the dimension of consciousness that we call awareness predominates over thinking so it is a gradual shift from thinking being dominated by thinking to awareness of presence that is a new state of consciousness thinking then can still operate but not as an autonomous entity, simply as a tool through which awareness can express itself this is your life purpose, is to live that whatever you do on the surface of your life whether you are working a company or you are a teacher or you are a nurse or you are a hairdresser or you are a gardener or you at the moment are nothing at all these things are just labels anyway they are temporary things whatever you do externally is secondary the main purpose of your life is to awaken and to bring that state of consciousness into whatever you do and bring presence into your words so all the things arise no longer out of the conditioned self but arise out of the unconditioned and then a new world through you comes into being it's the world around you it spreads out so we are not, our aim is not to create a new world out there but the transformation of consciousness and then naturally the reflection of that is a new world and the transformation of consciousness even that, I wouldn't seek it as a goal it's already here in this moment when you become aligned with it, with life simple and wonderful so don't ask what's the meaning of my life this is the meaning of

your life and for some of you what you do will suddenly change dramatically as a new consciousness arises more and more others will transform will stay where they are and transform what they do by bringing that new consciousness into their actions and suddenly transform their environment it's a beautiful adventure to be alive on this planet at a time of incredible problem and incredible possibility of a total shift in consciousness that's it that's your purpose thank you

[Speaker 3] (5:21:43 - 5:21:48)

music

[Speaker 6] (5:21:51 - 5:22:01)

music music

[Speaker 4] (5:22:47 - 5:23:09)

music music music music music music

[Speaker 3] (5:23:23 - 5:23:53)

music music music music music music music music music music music music

[Speaker 1] (5:23:58 - 7:01:23)

music music music I had forgotten what the title of our intensive was and I just realized when I was waiting there I believe he said the secret of happiness it's an interesting topic for lack of a better word we call our gathering intensive intensive although you may well ask what can possibly be intensive about just sitting here for a few hours and listening to somebody usually when you think of intensive it involves perhaps physical movement jumping up and down emotional expression catharsis screaming, weeping that's intense or intensive or it could involve intensive use of the mind so if it's not intensive physically it's not intensive emotionally this is not to say that you may not have occasionally emotions passing through your body while you sit here and if it's not intensive mentally because we are not going to discuss deep philosophical problems or mathematical problems or whatever other problems the mind can create to entertain itself then what's intensive about this gathering it's not in the physical realm of movement or doing it's not in the emotional realm it's not in the mental realm so if you are here expecting emotional physical, mental stimulation you will be disappointed because we are not here to add anything to the mind we are not here to add content to the already considerable accumulation of content that is in everybody's mind we are here to access a dimension of consciousness that has nothing to do with the content in your mind you cannot access that dimension of consciousness through thought thought and yet to some extent thought plays a subsidiary function here for us because some thought is operating because thought is required for these words to come out of this mouth but these words

are not what this is all about it is not the main thing here the words are only pointers or signposts pointing to a dimension that is present in every human being already but usually completely we could say overlooked it is that dimension is already present in each and every one of you and yet the tendency is for the human being to be so fascinated by the content of their lives which includes your external situation the physical realm the things that surround you things that happen one thing after another content content is what happens externally and internally internally it is the movement of thought it's the content and the emotions that accompany those thoughts so everybody is fascinated almost we could say hypnotized by the content of their lives and they call that accumulation of content things, forms physical forms, thought forms sense perceptions they all form one kind of form or another and so this accumulation of content usually people refer to as my life and when you say my life you have already transformed your life and yourself into content my life, you've already split life into two bits life and me I have a life that means there's life somewhere there and then there's me and I have it and the moment you believe that you have life then of course you could also lose it and then what's left when you lose it who are you if you are not life so the realm of content is not what matters here and that includes the words that are spoken here now you may have noticed or you may not depends how hypnotized you are by content you may have noticed that there are words being spoken here but there's also something else here and that's a background to the words and we could call that there is a stillness or silence here also, oh I hadn't noticed that yeah but now you do that silence was here all the time underneath and in between the words but perhaps you were only focused on the words not focused on the space the silent space out of which the words continuously come so as a first step into this consciousness that has nothing to do with content as the first step we notice that here there is sound words and there is an underlying silence also now if you were totally fascinated by the words only very quickly here, sitting here you would arrive at a point of frustration because the words in themselves are not that interesting they're only a help to get you they're only pointers to get you to that other dimension so if you were never able to even notice that there is a stillness here also then it would become frustrating to sit here for very long because the words are not that interesting not some exciting new ideas but only pointers so for this intensive to be to work for you I suggest as a first step notice this dimension that we could call stillness or silence that is there underneath the words in between the words now it's a strange thing when I say notice the silence something happens to you these words are pointers notice the silence now observe what happens inside you when you hear these words and you there's a shift then your attention moves before your attention was on form the words now your attention is on nothing not a thing no thing your attention for a moment when you just notice silence you become still inside in the very moment of noticing silence the mind has also become silent because only the silence in you can notice the silence out there thought cannot notice silence completely unaware of that dimension because thought is noise, thought is form mental formations so form cannot know, doesn't even know it exists, the formless dimension which right now we

call silence when it's the inner we could call it stillness so thinking has no idea of silence or stillness for the thinking mind it does not exist because the thinking mind is form and when you are totally trapped in the world of form then the deeper dimension the only thing that can free you from being bound to the world of form does not exist for you you are then totally trapped in content seeking happiness in the things of your life so we notice that there is a silence in this room in this room the moment you notice it in that moment you are not thinking and if you can sit here and pay equal attention to the words and to the silence then a deeper dimension is arising as you sit here and you may notice after a little while the mind may say something about the silence or something that has nothing to do with anything that's here and then you can take your attention back to the silence and what that also means I call it you become present you become you totally inhabit this moment it is only in the cessation which means stopping of mind that you can be fully present here and now and this is an amazing thing and so we are here in this intensive because in almost each one of you, there may be one or two exceptions, people who didn't come voluntarily here husband or wife or boyfriend or girlfriend dragged them here and they said you need to come and listen now with the exception of those people even there miracles are possible this dimension is already arising in you otherwise you would already be extremely frustrated sitting here the body would start to twitch and move and you would start looking around can't stand it anymore here so it is already arising and here that's why you have come here and this is a deepening process and the reality of course of intensive is you learn here that the rest of your life is also the intensive so when we finish here the intensive continues and is called your life of course it's just words there is no such thing as your life there is only life there are deep seated collective mind patterns that are also still active in you and those mind patterns have no idea what this is all about and occasionally you may find yourself being drawn back into those mind patterns which live on time past and future and you are being lost in a mind stream not here anymore and the mind stream will be talking the inner dialogue some kind of commentary it may even be commenting on something that is being said here or it may be commenting on tonight's dinner or tomorrow's problem because every problem is tomorrow's problem never now never now just the same as in the London pub there was a sign which still is there which says free beer tomorrow and then if you come back tomorrow and say I want my free beer the innkeeper will point to the sign and say tomorrow of course that's how going to a pub in London can be a deep spiritual experience because it shows you that tomorrow never comes when it comes it's today the next moment never comes when it comes it's now but nobody seems to know that because the mind patterns deeply conditioned collective mind patterns live on past and future all the movement of thought in your mind is conditioned of course by the past whatever thoughts you think are to do with the language in which you think those thoughts which in turn is a creation of thousands of years of collective past so even the language already contains an enormous amount of past the very structure of language how you think in your language and then the collective past of your culture and your surroundings which creates the kinds of thoughts

that go through your head and there is the personal past of your upbringing and your environment and your parents and there is still the mum's voice in there somewhere and the dad's voice is still in there somewhere and other voices are in there talking and it's all past, it's the movement of thinking content of your mind and when people say my life they are referring to the movement of thought in my head the thought forms that are going through my head is my life because apart from the thoughts in my head there is no such thing as past the only existence past has is as a thought in the head, is that true? you have to examine and look carefully, is that really true? but this is not you don't find the truth of this through some complicated intellectual analysis is there a past or not arguments for arguments against and then we can have an argument, you say there is a past and I say no I'm telling you there isn't you better believe me no we don't need that we can just look and see immediately if you just ask yourself have you ever been there in the past or whatever ever happened in your life was that now or was it ever the past of course nothing can happen if it's not in the now, it can't for anything to be, be implies now, being implies now and to be is the infinitive is is the third person singular of to be in English one might not think that because they look like different words or whatever you want in Dutch or in German also they have the infinitive, in German it would be sein is to be and ist is is, so what's the connection it's the same word, it's just changed through frequent use, it looks as if it were a different word but is and be are the same thing and they are always inseparable from now there is no is apart from now can't be, so nothing ever is in the past for anything to is to be it must be now so what we call past when it so called happened it was the now and when I remember it and talk about it now it's still the now there's no life apart from now and then the incredible thing is this verb to be has also a first person singular and that looks like a completely different word again I am and I am is also inseparable from now you cannot be anywhere except now but nobody seems to know that because everybody lives for something else they live as if there was something much more important than now and for most people it's called the future and what we said about the past applies to the future it does not exist except as a thought in the head tomorrow free beer never comes because tomorrow is only a thought in the head the next moment a thought even to say that we are going to spend a few hours here tonight on a conventional level is true but if you look deeper in absolute terms we are not it's only always now it's only when you start thinking and looking at your watch then you remember ok we've been here for such and such a time and we are going to spend here another two or three hours oh my god I can't, it's too much so this only when you start thinking the future suddenly appears and of course it has its place in the practical realm that's fine but beyond that it's a trap it's an illusion so there is only ever now past the accumulation of past in the mind has become a kind of phantasm a kind of entity a mind created a little thing that says I I, me mine, my, I I like myself, I don't like myself, I love myself I hate myself, I don't have a good relationship with myself, I must improve the relationship with myself I wonder what's going to happen to me what will happen to me my life it's not working out my life I have to do something about my life, it's really really so much has gone wrong in my life, so much this wasn't what I expected

when I was young I imagined my life to be very different from where it is now how could this happen, I'm missing out on life life is passing me by everybody else seems to be alive, I'm not I don't I don't have a life so there is an entity there one or two of you may have recognized something just now I gave you just a few to choose from to recognize there's certainly one that applies to one of you I could go on for a whole hour probably so there is a little man or woman in here talking all the time and worrying about my life and won't stop talking and this man or woman in the head has a history it's made up of history it's made up of mind content it's made up of past accumulations from the so called past a conditioned entity called I, or at least it says I and when it says I it means me and my story and I have an opinion of myself it may vary, one day it may be quite good and then something happens and my opinion of myself changes I have a view of who I am which again is the movement of thought and it is quite normal to be completely identified with that movement of thought in your head and derive from it your sense of who you are that's me and my life so it's the identification with content or form me and my life so a sense of self derived on from your so called personal history so we have this entity the me or the I and it's past made up of past and it's what kind of state does it exist in it's a state of very frequent unease discontent lack something missing here in my life what is it, ok start thinking there's something missing in my life some people have not quite sure what's missing others know very well what's missing I need a relationship a man or woman that's my destiny to meet and still haven't met him or her when finally I become prosperous then I will be free I need this, I need that and in the meantime oh I need enlightenment because you've already seen all the other things didn't work laughter ok let's try this one last thing laughter laughter and if that doesn't work then I give up laughter oh maybe you're getting close to enlightenment laughter so this me is occasionally happy something good has happened or somebody has recognized you as a great person laughter I feel good about myself today laughter and then time passes a few hours and ok it's no longer that thing doesn't make me feel good anymore it's wearing out it wears off and then something missing again laughter restlessness discontent and then comes the question the unconscious surge comes how can I fill up this restlessness and discontent I've got to do something ok let's go to some stimulus loud music something is happening laughter it feels more alive and then you leave now and of course the me is for many these days is very stressed because it needs to get to the next moment and stress has become so widespread that it's the whole civilization is run by stressful people laughter stress or what does stress mean stress is normal therefore it's not recognized as a mental disease if everybody has a disease you can't recognize it anymore as a disease so stress is normal but it is also insane I usually equate normal with insane if you doubt that I would refer you to a history book human history or the news tonight on TV so so stress is I need to get to the next moment or the one after that but in the meantime I am here it's a mental projection to there while I am here now when you see how this works I will act it out now because it's easier to see it and you spend your whole life a large part of your life like that except when you are drunk or take some drugs this is Amsterdam so here you would have a smoke laughter

and when you smoke you become a little bit free I am not advocating anything but laughter you become a little bit free of this incessant little me that's complaining and searching and looking for this or that and talking continuously in your head and never shuts up and you are so identified with it you don't even know that there is a little thing in your head because you think it's you you don't even for most people they don't know that they have a thing in their head they are the thing in their head laughter and so it's a burden to live with it's torture to live with that it's never at ease or very rarely at ease so it needs occasionally to have a puff laughter and then it's quiet the voice becomes a little bit more calm sigh and you feel a little bit more alive sigh and you can even laugh smile because the little me doesn't laugh that much, life is too serious it's not that much to laugh about, I have serious problems laughter or you drink it's also a little bit of liberation from this incessant voice and then you feel a little bit better a little bit more alive for a little while sigh you are not trying to get to the next moment so is the secret of happiness, have we found it? no not yet because you are falling below the movement of thought that's one way of becoming free you fall below thought this is also the level where in mythology you have the so called fool who is an important figure in some tales, in the most recent manifestation of the fool is perhaps the hobbit in Lord of the Rings, a very lovable creature but he doesn't think that much, his mind is not highly developed he is still below largely below thought and identification with thought and therefore in mythology the fool is closer to being than the ordinary mad human he is also in some way less mad than the more highly developed human and he has access, he is sometimes used as an instrument by life for important functions, the hobbit has to do this big thing and he is he doesn't know much and yet life uses him because he has a deeper connection with life the animal has that connection too the dog, the tree they don't have a an entity in their head that talks continuously and has a life and talks about my life and a problematic world no, they just are they are so when you take drugs or whatever you experience a little bit of freedom but you are moving towards sleep a few more drinks and you drop off the chair and in the meantime you had a little bit of freedom but you were going so we are not going this way otherwise I would be distributing things to smoke here first of all how do we become free of this conditioned, uneasy discontent a lot of the time unhappy a lot of the time complaining a lot of the time thinking of him or herself as inferior or superior to him or the other person this stress needing to why always needing to get to the next moment because I feel unfulfilled in this moment I haven't there is something missing here in this moment that's why I'm trying to get to the next moment in whatever form the next moment appears it could just be I'm trying to get this thing ready I have to finish this work by tomorrow so I have to make a cup of tea the me exists in a state of basic dissatisfaction and unease and lack therefore it seeks its own fulfillment it comes from the past it's a product of the past and it's unsatisfying and it seeks satisfaction in the future so this is where every little me hopes to find him or herself the completion of my life so that my life actually begins to work I want my life to really work well now it's only working in part and there are big things that are sabotaging always my life so you're looking for

completion of the me in the future and that's why every mind made entity thinks of the future as more important than anything else, more important than the present moment because you're trying to find yourself ultimately there even if you need to get to the future you try to get the content that is still missing according to the story of me there's still certain content to me that's still missing so through the future it hopes to get this content whatever it may be content could be the idea of wealth the idea of possessions possessions could be content my, when I have when I can move to a big house then I will feel I have become somebody I have expanded into the house and when you move in for a little while it works, you move into the big house and you look around and you seem to have expanded because you identify with this as me, content really it's a mind form it's not the house but what the mind makes of it so you expand into the house and you can sit there and feel bigger and you've made it the expression in English is making it funny expression I have made it but that only works if others are confirming to you that you've made it it's not enough if you tell yourself I have made it if nobody else agrees with you so you need to invite others to your big house and only when they say or imply that you have made it then you feel ah, it's working I finally arrived and that works for a while how long depends on the individual it could be a few months or a year or five years and if you're a slow learner it could take 20 or 30 years and you keep having dinner parties and they're all wonderfully fulfilling always they come and they admire you and they say you're great and then 40 years pass and then gradually you look in the mirror and say there's something wrong with this mirror something has changed and then all the young and beautiful people don't come to your house anymore and they don't tell you that you've made it anymore well that's for the slow learner but usually it goes faster than that after a year, two, three years it doesn't work anymore to give you this enhanced sense of who you are you need to look to the next thing whatever that may be relationship, of course, that's it and then that works everybody knows about relationships how they work intimate relationships euphoria at first wait a moment first comes the expectation could he be the one or she be the one and then comes the first dinner dinner date everybody's playing this role you can see in restaurants when the couples who've only just met you can immediately recognize them because they're acting out some part and then the relationship starts and then euphoria begins you've maybe fallen in love can't think of anybody else just thinking that's what all the pop songs even now, many of them are still about that except the country songs they're about the next stage because the country songs as you know they're about she's left me on a Harley and she's gone with this other guy in the meantime you have the euphoria and the next stage is then when you live together then something happens something happens and you wonder did I make a mistake one day comes this first thought hmm she's not supposed to behave like that that wasn't the idea I don't need to explain the rest we all know and so then of course you can always try another relationship and so some people are addicted to that kind of thing ego fulfillment through that and then they they can't even be with one for very long because they already know it's not going to work anyway so they already look out for the next one so the ego believes by adding this

or that or you may find experiences maybe you're done with physical things possessions or dinner parties or relationships now I want to experience things when you go off on balloons around the world or whatever because you can afford it so you can buy any experience you try everything you take the mushrooms you go to a desert island you dive anything mountain climbing everything is explored live life to the fullest and even there you wake up in the middle of the night and this feeling of unease and discontent and anxiety still not it and if if you achieve everything that the world tells you you need to be fully yourself then you're really in a bad state because then you have no other escape anymore if you already have everything the world tells you you need to be happy and you're not happy where do you go from there? and there you can go either into recognizing the falsity the emptiness of all those things that you had identified with or you have to just drug yourself so that you can't feel the pain anymore and so I recently read an interview with a famous actress and I admired her honesty and it's not about her it's about the human condition when I tell you this now so she was honest and courageous enough to tell the interviewer that when she got the Oscar for a film her name is Nicole Kidman she was sitting in this sumptuous hotel suite in Hollywood after the Oscar nomination after she got the Oscar she had everything the world admired she was on every front page and there she was she said I was sitting in this suite and thinking here I am with the Oscar and I still don't have a life what an amazing realization and so of course the life that she was looking for she was looking for in the realm of content something to add that will complete me and of course as the human story goes a few months later she met the ideal man so suddenly she felt she had a life and a few months later the ideal man had to go to a drug rehabilitation clinic oh no why do you always I thought I had a life and now it's the very life that I thought I had is now making me unhappy again it's the human condition so if you cannot go beyond this collective conditioning of deriving your sense of who you are from the little me which is your personal history and the conditioning and needing the future to complete myself to find myself to finally make it it doesn't work everybody will tell you it doesn't work those who have made it and as a last resort of course the spiritual person needs the future in order to arrive at some state that you have been told is possible to achieve so you need to arrive at some state of whatever you call it liberation enlightenment I need to get there I need to become that and of course the same mind pattern that needs the future for it's projected fulfillment still operates I need to become this or that and again the present moment is a stepping stone that enables me to get there to become that and the spiritual seeker who cannot break out of this mind pattern deeply conditioned remains a spiritual seeker and for the ego itself that too can be quite satisfying because it loves time so if I could tell you that by doing this or that in 25 years time you will reach the state of enlightenment the ego itself would feel quite satisfied oh 25 years I can make it, I can still make it unless you are 90 years old already give me time please give me time to find myself, give me time and so the one vital thing is ignored and we call that vital thing, which is not a thing initially we call it the present moment the present the very thing that the little me always tries to get away from or that's never enough or that's just

a means to an end or it's even made into an enemy get me out of here get me out of here some people who have extreme forms of this dysfunction it's a dysfunction that is operating in everybody some have it to a greater extreme than others people who embody this dysfunction to an extreme degree make the present moment habitually into their enemy for example their continuous contraction, they don't want to be where they are and whatever situation they go into they very quickly find something to complain about and to see why this is a very bad situation or whoever they meet they very quickly find something to criticize about that person and immediately condemn him or her so any situation they encounter the little me has this particular function in their case is that it immediately criticizes complains and judges, this just isn't good enough wherever they go they will complain and find something is wrong and it's easy in this world of course to do that all situations are enemies some people go to court continuously fighting this or that in its extreme form you look into a person's eye and you see they are just waiting for you to say the one wrong word and then they'll get you complaining in the head he shouldn't, they shouldn't, this shouldn't I don't know making the present moment into an enemy, making the present moment into an obstacle another variation of that unconsciously considering the present moment all there ever is life itself I treat it as if it were an obstacle I need to overcome get out of the way who are you talking to? to life, get out of there I want to get there, not here, there and when that is your state that you manifest life reflects it back to you and it gives you one huge obstacle after another and you experience life as hostile if you're complaining all the time then life will reflect back to you your state of consciousness and it will show you it becomes a hostile place as it is for many humans on this planet life is very hostile so that it is the change must be within, if you live in a violent country yes, you experience life as hostile but it has to start with yourself the moment you start addressing the dysfunction of the human mind and going beyond it things around you change at first just a little ripple perhaps one or two people close to you perhaps one or two people you meet accidentally and how you treat them how they treat you and how you treat them non-reactive and so gradually the change spreads around you and it can only be violence which is one extreme manifestation of the dysfunction I'm talking now about physical violence but there are many other forms of violence that you do to yourself mentally you can only go beyond it not by creating some new laws or new constitution that comes much later by addressing the dysfunction of the human mind in yourself addressing first of all means recognizing it seeing the whole structure of your mind which is the human mind not a personal problem it's not a personal thing isn't that a relief to know that what you thought were all your personal problems and the whole problematic my life is not personal at all it's structural it's in the very structure of the conditioned human mind the problem making the unease, the discontent the sense of lack the fear, the anxiety is part of the structure of the human mind you can put any content in and the structure will resurface after a little while again and then you are unhappy in a big house before you were unhappy in a small house and then you are angry in a big car before you were angry on your bicycle first we need to recognize the madness of living in this way if we don't see it then we will

get trapped in it again and again the madness that has been human the normal human existence ever since we can go back in history it's insane with a few lucid moments if humanity were a single human being and you looked at the history of this human being you would say well this is clearly a highly pathological psychotic individual great propensity to violence completely unpredictable has committed mass murder many times but occasionally he has had, he or she has had a few lucid moments where something else came through little moments of awakening and some have become, some of the lucid moments came through the great creative humans who created because they were in touch with something deeper than the little unhappy me and then the most lucid moments were the great spiritual teachers who recognized the madness of the human mind called it by different names but that was the great, the early life awakenings of humanity amazing insights 2600 years ago the Buddha saw it all saw the suffering that humans create for themselves and for others so much that he equated human existence with suffering and that of course is unawakened human existence because the whole teaching also shows that there is a way beyond the first step is the recognition that the human mind which includes your mind is quite insane and it's not your personal problem when you the recognition is already liberating and this is why when we have been talking about the madness of the human mind many of you laughed because when you see it suddenly you feel it's true, it is mad when it's actually shown to you because one takes it for granted, it's so much part of one's existence, you don't see it yes, stress is a mental disease, of course it is when you look at it and the whole way in which humans live ok, that's liberating and that insight has come from somewhere else it has come from a place where you can look at the whole content that makes up the human mind including even the structure of the human mind and see it for what it is and that seeing or that knowing is there because something that is not part of the movement of thought can see that and that's why we are here we had to address of course the madness first because if you don't see it it can pull you back in again and again and even if you see it it will still occasionally pull you back in again and again so we have all that how do we step out of all this dysfunction that is reflected in human history and even nowadays in most of what you see in politics and almost everywhere some in more extreme forms than others there are places on the planet where the dysfunction there are focal points of dysfunction of enormous violence and madness and then there are places that are relatively peaceful like this country and the people seem relative to some other places quite sane relatively sane relative to other places quite sane that is true and yet even here there is dysfunction in people's personal lives in relationships at work, in work situations in politics wherever there is the suffering that humans generate for themselves and for others unconsciously yes there is suffering even in Holland so how do we go beyond the first step is already very important it is to see it in one's own life without falling into the mistake of believing that now you have another problem saying oh I am mad it's nothing to do with you it's a movement that operates in you, it's taken possession of you so we see it it is liberating to recognize madness as madness and if you recognize madness as madness you can't be completely mad if you are completely

mad you don't know that you are mad those people are completely mad or they shoot you if you say you are mad the real madness there is no recognition of madness as madness and you don't even have to call yourself I am mad because that would be identification with the conditioned content of your mind you can only see that there is this mind movement in me and there is this voice in the head that pretends to be me and continuously says I and refers to I and my story I and my problems I and my anxieties I and my desires I and my wants I and my needs I and all this is implied when this entity speaks the word I and it's if that's all there is in your life then frustration is inevitable suffering is inevitable and every happiness that you think you find will turn into unhappiness so we need to look at now the one thing that this entity that has taken possession of you so to speak the words are just trying to convey something through the words, they are never an ultimate truth because if you only hang to if you only attach yourself to the words then your little mind is going to say I don't agree with your term of entity I don't think we have an entity in the head I think it's something else, it doesn't matter I'm just using little pointers they are only helpful as pointers not as explanations so I'm just suggesting this is one way of looking at it there is there is this little entity in your head and it's a moment of thought it never stops it talks and for a lot of the time you've been identified with it it's become you it needs desperately the future because it believes it can complete itself there but it doesn't work for everything else time and future is quite good except for finding yourself being yourself this implies also if we want to use the term happiness which is the title of our gathering you cannot find happiness through this little entity not the true happiness many forms of false happiness and the true happiness, I don't even like to call it happiness because it's something much deeper but let's just for a moment call it that there's that the one thing it doesn't like it overlooks tries to get away from makes it into an enemy makes it into an obstacle the present moment the present moment the present moment is actually a portal out of this whole conditioned state the present moment is the opening but usually of course you only see you don't see the depths of what that means present moment usually you only see the surface appearance of the present moment and when you only see the surface appearance of the present moment a lot of the time it doesn't look that great what's so good about this moment the mind says, there's nothing special it's just boring I mean and that's at the best of times what's so great about this I'm on a bicycle or I'm sitting somewhere doing this and that trying to get home, trying to do this what's so great about this moment but you only glance at it superficially and say no, that's not what I want and actually and then you consider the present moment not as an opening you consider it as the very thing that prevents you from getting what you want so it's blocking me for many people their lives have so many so called limitations they believe the present moment is blocking me, it's preventing me from getting where I want to get here I sit in this crummy little room and I want to get out of here and I want to have a life oh that sounds familiar I want to have a life somebody else said that in some other room a bit more luxurious it is habitual for the mind made self the egoic entity we can call it that to resist or deny the present moment that's normal you have to make it conscious

so that you see what the mind is doing if you make it conscious and see there's resistance, there's denial then there's a choice suddenly the possibility opens up to say ok let's experiment let's see what happens if I simply say well this is the present moment and the present moment is life itself you've seen that now it is inseparable from being itself from life itself so I may as well welcome this moment I may as well see what happens if I no longer internally resist or judge it of course the judging and the resisting is usually unconscious so first you notice that there is judgment or resistance because that's the old habit and then it can be relinquished you bring to the present moment the word yes because you don't argue anymore with the isness of life the isness of life which is now it's always now and there you have the present moment which is there's only ever one moment that's the strange thing I need to just mention this briefly there's only ever one moment, it is this one the belief that there are many moments throughout a day or in an hour is created through confusing the appearance or the form that the present moment takes which changes continuously with the essence of what the present moment is it will the form is let's examine it now this sense perceptions this room a man sitting on a chair the visual sense perception of that a voice, auditory sense perception peripheral awareness of the room and other people in the room the body on a chair certain colors here and there perhaps some physical thing you can feel perhaps a little pain because you've been sitting for a while there's a little pain there perhaps an emotion passing through because for a moment a thought comes about tomorrow and my problems and a little anxiety flutter comes in and then you come back to okay this moment and thoughts may come in also come in but if you're attentive here there's not really much need to think just as I don't think so just as I listen to the words you listen to the words and there's no need to think in between I don't know what the next word is that's going to come out how could I know just you listen I listen, we listen we listen to the words that come the vocal chords that are being used for these words happen to be belong to this band sitting on a chair here, that's all so this is the form of the present moment inner and outer forms arising sense perceptions okay, this is all now it's all now it's all now okay, that's how it is it's neither good or bad it just is as it is and that's always the case with now this could be worse or it could be better the mind might say the mind might say okay it could be better greater sense pleasures I might be sitting with a beautiful man or woman about to make love or I could be on a beach in Hawaii but well, even on a beach in Hawaii you would either be sitting or standing or lying on that beach there would be sun on the skin okay, a little bit better than the lights here but it's not that much of a difference I mean just staying with just the simple is-ness and not the fantasies of the mind that say I could be happy there try this just try this first because if you're not happy here, probably you couldn't be happy there either and I've had letters from people in prison who have put this into practice and they have written to me and said, I have found freedom freedom from dependence on external conditions now what we are talking about at the moment are the conditions of the moment the conditions that arise at this moment and for any condition to arise it can only arise in the now there is no other condition apart from the now nothing arises in the past or the future for

anything to be, to exist to be, it has to be now being and now are one so it's life itself so we are experimenting with life itself it looks at the moment as if we were separate from it because I'm using language but that's fine there's the form of this moment which changes all the time because after a while you move away and then the now, other forms appear in that now but it doesn't mean that there are many different nows, it's always now what is true is that the forms that appear change continuously in the one now it does not mean that there are many nows because it's always the one now so when people believe there are many different moments, that's only a superficial way of looking at the world things continuously change but there is an underlying something which is not a thing there is an underlying space out of which all these forms, the appearances come now, what we want to is to experience to get to, to sense to become one with, to realize ourselves as that underlying formless dimension that is not, has nothing to do with time it is timeless another word for which is eternal the dimension of the eternal in you, one could say the dimension of the eternal but as long as you regard the forms that arise in the present moment as obstacles then they become obstacles and they become that which blocks your access to the deeper dimension of the formless in yourself as long as you regard what happens internally or externally as undesirable and as an obstacle or as an enemy or as something to be run away from as long as that happens then whatever form this moment takes, the very form becomes the blockage and that's of course how most people experience life they experience life, their limitations of life very strongly and they believe that the form of the present moment limits them they believe it if they sit in a little tiny room and say, ok here I am I want to, my life to expand, ok but have you actually gone deeper into this moment and have you found an inner relationship of yes, or are you are you rejecting the form of this moment and as we've seen you can do the same you can be in the most luxurious suite in Beverly Hills and still reject the form of this moment you can do that anywhere and it's habitual now what happens if you do not reject the form which seems so limiting, the form seems limiting a lot of the time it looks as if it were the very thing that you don't want in the present moment you're on a crowded bus, I don't want to be on a crowded bus, but you are I'm stuck in a traffic jam, I don't want to be stuck in a traffic jam but you are I've got these noisy children at home, I don't want to I want some peace and quiet for my meditation but the noisy children are there they are, it's all the is-ness of this moment I need this or that to be happy but I don't, I have this but this is what is you have to start start with this and this is where the transformation of your life which isn't your life the transformation whatever language says is wrong somewhere so you need to know that so every word has only relative validity as Goethe said the moment you speak you already begin to to be wrong the moment you speak, you're wrong denn wenn man spricht beginnt man schon zu irren and we are talking a lot here, so this is why you need to know that the words are not never absolute, they're never quite right especially when they address the transcendental because words come from the world of things the table is here when I say that the words work I sit on the chair okay, that's true well, even that one could argue with if you're a philosopher you can say, how do you know that there's

really a chair there so we start by paying attention to the form of this moment and finding a new relationship with the form of this moment because we have realized that if you argue internally or resist internally the isness of now the form that the now takes you suffer but what happens if you accept the isness, because you've realized that to argue with is, is mad and it's dysfunctional, and makes you unhappy, and then if you become unhappy, you make others unhappy that's your business then, when you're happy you make others unhappy cannot make others unhappy so instead of running away into some thought structure that says me in some future existence where I'm happy either as a wealthy man or an attractive man or woman or somebody who has achieved enlightenment stay with just this just this moment, and no matter how limiting the form of this moment seems to be you cannot argue with the fact that it is right now the way it is it is, one could say to use philosophical language this moment is always already the case the form it takes it is, ok, let's see form life is taking at this moment if you bring an inner yes to whatever form this moment takes, the crowded bus the traffic jam the noisy place where you happen to be the children screaming telephones ringing loud noise starting up behind you some drill what does your mind do then? does it say, oh what a dreadful noise no that's a mistake already the noise is what it is the dreadful you supplied now if you don't supply the dreadful there is just the noise as it is and if you don't resist it's just one example if you don't resist the noise internally through judgment and contraction it passes through you if you resist it it hits a barrier what a dreadful then the noise hits you because you have said dreadful you have become dense and if you are dense things hit you and they are painful so in order for things not to hit you whatever it is, noise or other things, people people are even more irritating than noise I can deal with noise but people so irritating no you supply the irritation and the people are as they are in the now so there is no irritating person there is only a person behaving according to his or her conditioning at this moment the irritation is what you give but humans confuse the two they mix up their reaction with the neutrality and the simplicity of the isness of now mix them up and say it's dreadful a dreadful thing no, there is the thing and there is me supplying the dreadful awful weather there is nothing awful about rain it's just water coming from the sky I supply the awful so can we be with the simplicity because now when we don't impose mental judgments on the form of this moment the moment actually becomes quite simple and it no longer has the capacity to hit you in other words your inner state of being is no longer dependent on what's going on what's happening or not happening whether somebody is behaving nicely or behaving unconsciously your inner state is no longer dependent on that when you accept the isness of this moment, the form of this moment, it is it already is the entire universe has brought it about if you wanted to investigate the cause of the form of this moment you have to travel back a billion years one thing leading to another and another and another and finally the form of this moment is this room with all the people in it or a crowded bus the entire universe has conspired to bring about the moment of this crowded bus in which you are sitting and hating it which also that has been brought about by the universe and the sudden awakening is also brought about ah, I can actually be here in

this crowded bus in a state of non resistance because it just is as it is and if I don't give the judgments, impose judgments on it, it's actually not that bad at all it just is and so when you become open to the is, the form of this moment is no longer a limitation it's almost as if a door were suddenly, before it was a big door closed suddenly a door opens and this door is really within one could say an inner door opens and suddenly you sense a background peace in the foreground whatever is happening is happening externally or even internally an emotion that's the foreground too the peace is deeper, here's the emotion and you say ok, there's the fear it is can't argue that there's this you don't even have to call it anything you just feel it there it is I can feel it there's nobody that says go away, I don't want to feel this but it is, you can't argue with is it is but how long am I going to it is, just stay this is, I don't want to be feeling this for the rest of my life we're not talking about the rest of your life, just this moment it is ok ok

[Speaker 6] (7:01:25 - 7:01:26)

hmm

[Speaker 1] (7:01:31 - 7:14:09)

hmm and even there suddenly you can feel under here peace aliveness peace and still the turbulent movement, inner, outer it's accepted the form of this moment is accepted and becomes an opening in the unconscious state the form of this moment is rejected and it therefore becomes the obstacle, that which blocks you from finding access to the deeper dimension who you are in essence the formless essence of who you are no form the peace is a space and we're using a word which is a form to describe of course the formless so when I say it is space that's not quite right either because we've already transformed it into some form by giving it a name but as you know we're just using language as pointers as in the Tao Te Ching at the beginning the Lao Tse says the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao because the Tao has no form and by talking about the Tao you give it a form, as if it were something that has form but it doesn't so as long as we know this is just language and just pointers then we don't go astray so here we have by simply coming to an opening to this you call you make the present moment let's put it in the most simple terms as I sometimes do which could be understood by a five year old child the present moment can be your friend or your enemy for most people the present moment is an enemy but if the present moment becomes your friend no matter what form it takes you have an unconditional acceptance of this friend because if it's your friend you accept it is and then the very condition that was a blockage becomes an opening into that which really we can no longer talk about in words but just a few little it is a spaciousness underneath it all then you have the condition and you have the space not that you have it you are it you are the space for whatever condition is going on and what is another name for that space the now that's the essence of now the depth of now you are the now in which everything happens you are that and that now is timeless no past no future and that is finding yourself but it

has nothing to do with the I that the little me utters some people may still call it a deeper I am because it's beingness itself these are all attempts to create pointers there's no more than that the essence here is the form which looks like a limitation can become an opening into the formless if the form is particularly unpleasant let's say your body is incapacitated you can't move your limbs anymore if the form is extremely limiting this is just one example or you're in prison if you then bring an acceptance to that it is as it is it can very quickly get you very deep very deep in that sense we can say the worst thing that happens to you in life and some people carry throughout their lives some dreadful burden could be physical whatever it is the worst thing that happens and you have to look at it always in the now bring an acceptance to it a total acceptance of the isness then the worst thing in your life becomes the best thing that ever could have happened to you because it then becomes the doorway and that also you have access to the this is the dimension we could call the sacred dimension the only thing that's sacred is not a thing sacred of course in our civilization has become meaningless, it's just an abstract concept, nobody knows what anybody is talking about in fact very few people use the word sacred anymore the sacred realm is the realm of the formless of space there is no sacredness in form and yet the strange thing is when you have access to that and again language separates it in essence you are that formless then you can sense that dimension shining through every other being and so when you then meet another human being or an animal or a tree somehow you feel this very this essence that you know as yourself that is completely formless shines through the form of that other form and you sense it through your own so to speak and so although I said the sacredness is not in the form the sacred shines through the form it is the formless that shines through each form and you can only sense that when you found it in yourself and then you love everything every being as yourself in essence and that's the true deepest meaning of love which has no wanting in it whatsoever it is simply a recognition of the other as not really other it's a recognition of the other as yourself in essence and that's the recognition of course of oneness which is liberation liberation from form after that you can play with form still move in the world of form without being imprisoned by the world of form and so that dimension is true happiness, although I don't like that word because it's too superficial to describe that but we had to get you here so because the little me says I want happiness and you get something much better I also would say the cross the Christian symbol Jesus on the cross is contains that truth not in words to reach people beyond words because Jesus stands for the Christ stands for is the archetype for every human being the cross is a torture instrument it is a torture when you are identified with form you are attached to form and that is torture that's suffering when you surrender to form the form that appears now complete acceptance then the torture instrument form becomes the opening so you have the dual symbolism of the cross because why is the cross in Christianity a symbol of the sacred when it's a torture instrument how can they use a torture instrument and then it becomes a symbol of the sacred at the same time because they are one what looked like torture and what is the sacred have merged into one through acceptance you've gone beyond the limitations of form and beyond

attachment to form then the very form is the opening we are acknowledging both dimensions words stillness form formless that is also in the world of form where we seem to have these bodies they want to move so let's move the bodies and take a little break and when we meet again here it will be now on the level of form 30 minutes will have passed thank you

[Speaker 4] (7:14:39 - 7:15:08)

awaken to a long forgotten memory dawn is breaking waves are coming in everybody here standing in wonder beneath the rain and the thunder rising in love

[Speaker 3] (7:15:31 - 7:16:01)

the mind is connected to the Om Shanti Om Om Shanti Satchitananda Om Shanti Om

[Speaker 4] (7:17:04 - 7:17:16)

Om Shanti Om Shanti Beneath the rain and the thunder Rising in love

[Speaker 3] (7:17:22 - 7:17:45)

Om Shanti Satchitananda Om Shanti Om Om Shanti Satchitananda

[Speaker 1] (7:18:05 - 8:11:04)

Now there isn't a lot that you need to remember from this evening. The truth is already there. The essence is not in memory.

But I suggest if you want to remember something, I suggest one little pointer. And that is the question which you can ask yourself. No matter where you are, what the situation is, who you are with, what's happening or not happening, the question is, can I be the space for this?

Can I be the space for this? No. The truth is, of course, you are already the space for this, because it is pierced in this space.

But consciously be the space for this. Many things are implied in that question. Can I be the space for this?

Of course, implied is, can I accept this? Because you are the space when you accept this is-ness of now. It does not mean that you cannot still act also.

If action is necessary, it sometimes is. Response is necessary in a situation. You can be both the acting agent, the form that arises, and the space, without losing the sense of space while you act in this world.

Do this, do that, whatever is required. And that's the balance of living in the formless

and still being able to deal with the world of form. Much better deal with it in a very different way when the formless is present in the background.

Then the way in which you deal with the world of form is very different from the way in which you deal with the world of form when form is all you know. Because when form is all you know, then other forms, either you think you need them or they are threatening. And the world of form is heavy and really very serious.

When there is no sense of space, the world is a very heavy place, very serious. Everything matters absolutely. And for some people even the tiniest problem matters so much.

It's amazing what people get upset about. Of course sometimes big things happen. But it is amazing how people get upset about the silliest things and it matters.

Everything seems to matter absolutely when the truth is it only matters relatively. It's only there that you can approach this world, which is the world of form. You can approach it with a sense of freedom.

It's there where compassion comes in. The compassion arises from the space, not the form. And then you have allowing the forms to be as they are is compassion.

Not demanding that every human being should behave as if they were enlightened. And if they are not, immediately you pick out all the things that shows you then they are really silly or in bad intentions and do this and that. And they lie and they do this and then he did that and then he said that and that was wrong and then he did that.

Compassion with the human limitations, then you become a bringer of space. So in any situation you are there in a, one could almost say a two-fold capacity. You are there as a person, still for a little while, longer, until the person dissolves.

It's already in the process. You are there as a person and you are there as timeless space. You could say, if you wanted another pointer, you could say consciousness itself unconditioned.

Unformed, formless. Just that you are there as that and still do what you have to do on the level of form. And then you meet the conditions of the world that come at you.

Some things you do and other things come towards you. It's always a two-fold movement. You act upon the world and the world acts upon you.

Things happen to you and then at other times you make things happen. You encounter conditions continuously changing. And then you have a very different relationship to the conditions that you encounter in your life, which include people that come into the space of now.

Situations, people, happenings. And that relationship is the realization or the letting go of the hidden assumption that the conditions that arise in your life, external, internal, should satisfy you. They are here to give you satisfaction.

And that is the unconscious ego life. It's always dissatisfied because the condition isn't satisfying enough. And when you go into a satisfying condition, you look forward to something a lot and then you expect satisfaction once you get there.

And then often either you're disappointed, it doesn't quite work out according to your expectations, or it ends too quickly. Oh, the condition didn't do for me what I thought it would do for me. Conditions, then you realize, are not here to make you happy.

They can't. They're here to be transcended. Every condition in your life, yes, you deal with it, but it ultimately is here so that you become free.

And then you transcend the condition. And everybody will experience, everybody sitting here, very soon, for example, you will experience the body getting old. Gradually.

And then again the question arises, can I be the space for that? Because if you're not the space for that, if you cannot be the space for that, you suffer greatly when that happens. Can I be the space for that?

And again, it is a condition. It is not satisfying. Nobody can say that when your old age comes and death approaches, it is a satisfying condition, but it is a condition that can have a wonderful function in your life.

Can you be the space for that? And if you are the space for the gradual dissolution of the body, that can be an incredible flowering of the formless, shining more and more through the dissolving form. And so it happens with some old people.

As death approaches, they become more and more luminous from within. You can sense it coming through. As the form dissolves, the formless shines through into this world.

If you can be the space for that, then you transcend the condition. Inner dependency on the condition. You're not dependent on what happens or does not happen.

The inner dependency is gone. You transcend, which means you go beyond. And then you can say, as Krishnamurti did, when he was asked, what is your secret?

No, he wasn't asked. He actually said, let me tell you what my secret is. Let me tell you what my secret is.

Yes, please, we've been coming for 30 years waiting for you. And his secret is, I don't mind what happens. Which, of course, means I'm the space for what happens.

I know myself as the space for what happens. Wonderful. We have already pointed to the

present moment as the doorway.

First closed when it's resisted. Resist it, the form of it. Then when you realize your essential nature as space, and you surrender, because that's what it is, you surrender to life.

The most, it's not weakness, the greatest power comes into your life when you surrender to life. One with life. One with now.

One with whatever form the now takes. You surrender to life. Everything else is resistance, and you make yourself small through resistance.

Through surrender, there's a vast power in your life. So that is the key. Every moment, am I surrendered to this moment as it is?

Then the blockage becomes the opening. That is one of the great way of entering space consciousness, which I sometimes call it, it's not a science fiction term, space consciousness. Everything else is object consciousness.

The whole world is concerned with object consciousness. Shopping malls, object consciousness. Universities, object consciousness.

The news on TV and the whatever films you see, object consciousness. What children learn at school, object consciousness. Fed, all that, you know, everything, everybody's life consumed by stuff, another word for objects, stuff.

Things to do, one object after another. What to do next, another thing to do, another thing to do. What do we have to do now?

Things to think about, object consciousness. And object consciousness grasps objects, grasps. Okay, I need to think about this now at 3.30 in the morning in bed. You have to think about this now, it's very important. You have a huge problem. Think, think, think.

Oh, oh, God. It's never... Object consciousness.

Not knowing that freedom lies in that very space in bed at 3.30 in the morning, you could enter space consciousness. You feel an aliveness, a presence, you're not thinking. You just feel a presence where before there was thinking, there's now simply a formless presence, that you are that and it's far greater than you too.

And there's no problem there. It was mind created. So you enter.

And then you sense the qualitative difference between trapped in object consciousness and maybe in space consciousness. And space consciousness is not thought. You're conscious but there's no thought.

What is there to think about? A lot of the time thought can only detract from the aliveness of this moment. And then you practice object space consciousness even when you're looking at objects.

How do you do that? By not naming what you're looking at. You're just looking.

There is just the looking and there arises a form against the background of spaciousness or presence. Not naming continuously. What for?

Yes, you know it's a flower but you have to tell yourself something about it in your mind. Or even say, that's a pretty flower. That reminds me of my aunt who had that in her garden 10 years ago and I'd like to have that in my garden too.

I wonder where you can buy these. How much do they cost? Or they're called such and such.

I studied about this at university. You're not seeing the flower anymore. There's no sensing of the miracle of this.

There's just object consciousness. Can you approach things just being the space for the thing? And the compulsion to define through the mind, you recognize it as part of the insanity.

You have the definitions when you need them, of course. You're not going to forget language. You're not going to forget thought.

But you're no longer possessed by thought, by object consciousness. Then comes a freedom and you can experience the world as the space for the world in the simplicity of just this. This is why Jesus said, truly I tell you, you must become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Become as little children, he meant not judging anything, not defining, being in a spacious alertness, like a child before the child learns definitions and concepts. Then a child looks at the world in the original state of no thought. This child, of course, is pre-thought, before thought.

We are moving beyond thought. And that's the difference again of depth and of knowing. But we meet, so you become a child in that sense, but it is deeper because it's no longer the natural state.

You lost it and then regain it, so to speak. Just words. There's nobody there to regain the state.

You are it already and so on and so on. But this is essential, a wonderful practice, being with simple things, just being as the space. So it's not just when challenging things happen that you ask yourself, can I be the space for my mother-in-law or whatever it is?

And don't ask yourself that question before you meet her because that's abstract. I wonder if I can be the space for my mother-in-law. I'll try next time.

No, you only ask yourself the question when she's actually there, standing or sitting in front of you. And you don't even have to call her mother-in-law, just this. Can I be the space for this moment?

Oh, and it opens up. And there she is talking. And you're the space.

The need to react to immediately when the object consciousness comes at you to immediately reply with some object consciousness. So she makes some cutting remark and you make a cutting remark back or accuse her and immediately you go on, same old story. It's been going on for 15 years.

Space. And there she is. And then you might find, I don't know what this is, it must be her mouth.

Or her mind. And you have this. And then you may find that as you are not feeding it through opposition, it exhausts itself after a while.

Because it's not fun anymore. If she's not making you angry or upset, what's the fun? The fun has gone out of it.

So gradually she'll calm down. And perhaps suddenly space arises in her too. Of course it could be.

Mother-in-law has a bad reputation for some reason. But of course it could be any. It could be your father, your mother.

It can be quite a good test for presence. Can I be the space for my mother? Or my father?

When he says, What have you done with your life? You should have listened to me 30 years ago. Can I be the space for that?

Or am I going to contract and hate him again and hate myself and all the complicated things that happen? Just be the space for that. Another beautiful thing of inviting the space into your life, of being the space, is to remember that you're not here for that long.

And for that purpose, I always recommend occasional visits to the cemetery, which I love, walking around, and look at the gravestones, especially the famous dash that I wrote about also. Date of birth, date of death, dash in between. That's your life.

And just that is a deep meditation. Just look at the dash on the gravestones and then think about your problems. You can't because you realize the relativity of your problems

and all the things that are so important and dreadful or whatever they are.

That's where it'll all end, be reduced to that. Soon, quite soon, it's amazing. And that's the contemplation of impermanence.

The Buddhist word is a good one, to see how fleeting the forms are. And just, for example, just watching, have you seen a film, a speeded up version on a film, how a plant grows out of the soil and first the stem comes and goes, flower opens, and then it goes with us. And then another one comes.

And the same in human life. And if you could see a speeded up version of a city, you can see for a few years, the human being runs around the city, one city and another city. And one day, always the contemplation of impermanence, and you see it everywhere.

If you don't, if you have to just see, I saw a science fiction film some years ago, there was a time traveler who arrived here or at some point on Earth, and he traveled from 2,000 years in the future back here in order to witness some disaster that he knew was going to happen any moment now. Some huge disaster. And he was a scientist, and he wanted to find out more about it.

And the humans who realized that he was a time traveler from 2,000 years in the future, said to him, but you could save so many people, just tell them where is it going to happen so that the people can save themselves. And he said, but you're dead already. Of course, in his 2,000 years, it didn't make any difference to him whether these people would have died 2,000 years ago according to his time, or 1,950 years ago.

To him, they were all dead already. That's another way you can look at things. All the people walking around the city, they're dead already.

If you just look at the forms, so short-lived. And that contemplation, when you don't, when you just look at it and face it, can also bring about a sudden opening up of something within you that is a deep peace that comes when you see how short-lived every form is. I always, when I watch old films, 1930s, 1940s, all these actors running around the screen, they're all dead now.

And I look at it, it's amazing to see. They look so alive there, and they are suffering and loving and hating. And they're all dead.

Old photos, I love to watch old photos, especially crowd scenes in a big city, everybody cheering some political rally. They're all dead now. Just, it mattered absolutely to them that this politician should become the president, and he's dead too.

And that's the, it has a wonderful, it's a meditation to just, to actually see the impermanence, because something in you that recognizes impermanence as impermanence is the formless. It's from there, the timeless, that you can see that.

That's, it goes very deep when somebody very close to you dies, to allow that, can you be the space for that?

We already mentioned your own death as it gradually comes, or suddenly, but can you be the space for somebody very close to you? And again, on the level of form, yes, there may be, you may feel suffering, you may cry, but with the acceptance, if you can be the space for it, then underneath the crying, there will be a peace. And then, sometimes impermanence, when people study Buddhism or something, that it becomes, first of all, they know it as an abstract thing in the head, everything is impermanent, okay, okay.

But it doesn't, it has to really hit you, then you know it with every cell of the body and beyond. You feel the impermanence. And even, I'm certainly not attached to forms, but when my father died last year, it hit me again, how short-lived and relatively unimportant the form is.

My father lived for 90 years, partly trapped in ego, like most people, partly even more ego than most people I've ever met, and in part, in his last few years, becoming occasionally free of ego. There were moments of opening up into the space, there were moments of surrender. So he lived still in two worlds, the ego world with occasional lapses into consciousness.

So it was wonderful to see how gradually the ego became eroded. But the ego, of course, wanted to be important, so every ego wants to be special in one way or another. If it cannot be special in triumph, it can be special in its misery.

So that's, but when my father's coffin touched the ground in the grave, it hit me here, the truth of impermanence and of the unimportance of all the ego's desires and ambitions, the sound that the coffin made when it fell the last few inches to the ground in the grave. Wow. And that was, there was pain, suffering, there was deep sadness, and at the same time, enormous peace underneath it.

Tears came and peace underneath. It was the most powerful, that one sound seemed to be a pronouncement of the significance of human life only on the level of form. It all very quickly comes to that.

And so, as the saying goes, find death before death finds you. And that's what we are doing here, because death is when the form dissolves, and the deathless is the formless. Find the formless before the form dissolves.

And then you realize that death too is only a relative truth. In absolute terms, there is no death. Death means the form dissolves.

So we are dying here, voluntarily, dying to the self, the mind-made object self. And that's beautiful. And then death really is not that threatening anymore when it comes.

So contemplate impermanence wherever you find it, which means everywhere, and be the space. Be the space. Now, before we, if there are any questions, we may ask some questions, but before we go there, when you are the space, the compulsion to think lessens.

So whenever anything you encounter, any person or condition, situation, can I be the space? And when you are the space for it, yes, this is the gesture perhaps that expresses being the space for what happens. Can I be the space?

Yes. And when you are really the space, there is not much thinking when you are the space. Space is in no thought.

So the compulsion to always impose thoughts on whatever is going on is no longer there. And when that comes, freedom from being a conditioned entity, conditioned by form, conditioned by the past, and you can be here as the unconditioned consciousness. You transcend the person.

You are here as the unconditioned. And then you become a blessing in this world. One way or another.

It varies. But the essential thing is the compulsive naming, interpreting, judging, falls away and is replaced by an alert presence. You could call it, that's true, unconditioned intelligence.

The human mind, the thinking mind, is only a tiny aspect of that vastness. It's not true intelligence, what you can measure in IQ tests. It's a tiny aspect of true intelligence.

So you could call what is this process of becoming free of the conditioned, which is the thinking mind, you could call it the awakening of intelligence. Or the awakening, your awakening, the awakening of consciousness. And compared to that, your life before that was a dream-like state, because being always trapped in your thinking mind is a kind of dream.

And the world is full of people who are dreaming and they are actually running the world. So the old conditioning is still running, to a large extent, the world. As you can find out if you watch the news on television, the same old thing is still running the world.

Occasionally you get a little bit of a lucid moment when somebody is just not insane. In Russia you had Gorbachev, the first time in hundreds of years that the leader of the country was not insane. And Gorbachev was like a Buddha compared to the others, like a great enlightened being compared to the previous leaders of Russia who looked like stuffed figures who went like greeting the masses of weapons filing past them.

There was actually a theory that one of the previous communist leaders had been replaced by a machine like Dole because he had died years ago and they were still

wheeling him out. But that expresses the mechanical nature of that kind of existence and of course it's not confined to communism. All these other systems have it too.

I'm not mentioning any names of people who are alive. Becoming free of this conditioned entity that otherwise runs your life and you think it's you. The only thing that really has any true meaning in life is becoming free of that.

Everything else from now on, I suggest, you use every opportunity, which means every moment, which means whatever rises in the now, any condition you encounter, has a twofold purpose. One is, yes, you have to deal with the condition, but can you also be the space for the condition? And then gradually it's no longer you, the conditioned entity who is dealing with the condition, it's spontaneous action that arises out of the unconditioned consciousness.

It could be words, it could be action, and that is the only way the world can change. From the conditioned, no matter how much thinking we do, how can we create a better world? But the question is, have you woken up?

If you haven't woken up, no matter how hard you think and try to create a better world, you're going to create the same thing again. Communism was a wonderful attempt to create a better world, wonderful ideals. Everybody's equal, no property, the people decide everything, we don't want kings and queens.

Same rights, same for everybody, wonderful. And what happened? They had overlooked the fact that they were still asleep.

The old mind structures were still operating and tried to create a better world. And what did they do? They recreated the same hell that they had reacted against.

Under the Tsars, Russia was dreadful and under communism it was just as dreadful for normal, ordinary people. The suffering, dreadful suffering they created. Insane leaders suddenly arose out of these wonderful ideals.

You get somebody like Stalin. Where did he pop up from? We were meant to create a utopia and here comes this.

So the wonderful thing is we do not need to start thinking about how to bring about a better world. The better world arises out of the awakened consciousness. When you become free of your conditioning which is your collective human conditioning.

And this is why we're here. To become free of that. And to recognize it when it happens again.

Occasionally it will be back in your life. You'll be back as a little conditioned enemy acting against this or that and fighting, losing the space. And suddenly you wake up and

say what's going on here?

And then you suddenly become the space for this entity. Okay, here we go. There it is.

And then it subsides. So waking up out of thought. Thinking becomes secondary now.

This is the new stage of awakened humanity. Thinking no longer runs your life. It remains as a useful tool but it becomes secondary.

It doesn't give you your identity anymore. Thinking is replaced by which we could call awareness. Spacious awareness.

Consciousness. Presence. The state of no thought.

And that's the arising state. I suggest you cooperate with it. Invite it in.

That state of no thought. Say yes. Now when you think you cooperate with it what is actually happening?

It's a limited perspective. It means it's arising. It looks as if you could choose it even.

I sometimes say you can choose, some of you, not to think. Not through willpower. Because if it's through willpower then you'll think even more when you run out of willpower.

But through simple can I be the space for this is the choice not to think. Because you don't need to think. And then philosophers ask me who is choosing not to think?

Is it something that happens to me or am I doing it? Another philosopher. And of course the answer is when it looks to you as if you were choosing not to think then that is what's happening.

So all these arguments for those philosophers among you is there a doer? There's no doer. Yes, there's a doer.

It's just they're both right and they're both wrong. So put the two together. Yes, there is a doer if you look at it from this perspective and there's no doer looking from that perspective and then let's forget the question and stop thinking.

Now any questions that may arise are of course thoughts. Now some thoughts may have a useful function as pointers. And those thoughts if they become questions are thoughts to do with your transition into the new consciousness, the arising consciousness.

It's not new. It's not old. It's timeless.

Your transition and whatever obstacles there may be in your transition that you see and questions about that, vital questions or something to do with a close relationship in

connection with the awakening in yourself. Those would be vital questions. And then other questions that are simply the movement of thought would be abstract questions which are not helpful right here.

Simply they arise because the mind wants to entertain itself and keep itself busy or even as an obstacle to stopping thinking. So the mind comes up with a question and says, I don't think you are right about what you said about stopping thinking. Or it says, but such and such teacher, he said you can never stop thinking.

What about that? So if possible, vital, true questions that are pointers, not questions that are just designed to feed the mind a little bit more and keep it going or ask, what do you think about George W. Bush?

So please, there is one thing here called microphone and maybe another one there. Hello Eckhart, could you please comment on the direct sensing of the energy in the crown of the head That's all. Thank you.

One more question to you. Can you sense it now? Yes.

Could you sense it while you were sitting here? Yes. And you sense it at other times too?

Oh, ever more. Ever more. Increasingly.

Yes. Very direct. Also very direct in contact.

That's the main reason I came here. Very beautiful. Thank you.

Some people experience energy movements like that as different parts of the body that were hitherto closed open up to the incoming energy and the thing to do with it again is not to interpret it, over interpret it or formulate some kind of identity around it that is dangerous too to simply be the space for that movement and then it will change. The change comes as you are the space and then you will not put up any obstacle for what is happening. Allow the energy movement and you will then also feel other openings.

But the crown in some cases can be very active in certain people. But allow it to happen. It will find its own way.

No need to interpret what's happening. Just be with it. Don't give it any phenomenal thing that arises like an energy movement can be important but it is part of still part of the world of form.

So no energy movement that happens in the body or wherever it may be is the ultimate realization or answer. But it can be part of the transformation that is happening in you as things are becoming cleared. It can be part of that transformation.

If you attach an excessive importance to it a phenomenal thing becomes it. But nothing

is it. And eventually this energy movement will also subside and it will lead you into the formless.

But never attach an absolute importance to any energy movement. But be glad that it's there. But it's a phenomenon.

And as a phenomenon it has form and eventually it will transform. And so just allow that process.

[Speaker 5] (8:11:12 - 8:11:36)

I live in a society that requires people to be on time for their appointments. It's not in my nature to be living by these deadlines and I've taught myself to feel stress while getting ready to go so that I will feel pressured to watch the clock. How do I find space in those moments and still be on time for my appointments?

[Speaker 1] (8:11:36 - 8:16:47)

Thank you. Thank you. Now as you know there is what I call clock time and psychological time.

So your question as I see it is how do you not transform clock time which we need in this world into psychological time? So clock time, the world has deadlines and appointments and so on in itself is not problematic but whenever you are engaged in any kind of activity let's say I have one hour to finish this, to get ready for that or one hour to get ready for the trip or whatever it may be and so you look at the clock and then it's very easy for this to become transformed into psychological time and then you look to the one hour and you want to be at the end of it already but you are in the middle of it and stress arises. I have to do this quick. You can actually act fast without stress if your attention is in every movement that you are making that surrendered fast action expressed in the Zen saying hurry slowly.

So that is surrendered fast action and you can actually go in a state of great alertness not thinking you can just look and do what I need to pack and then you just look open mandala and move fast enjoying the aliveness of that moment the energy movement up to a point but you live in a mad world so the mad world will often give you deadlines that almost nobody could meet it becomes completely absurd so you are supposed to finish three jobs overnight and you can't do it and there is a place to say I will do as much as I can but I won't do this because I can only fit this in and be present with this every moment every moment the moment is given complete attention to the doing not where you want to get to you can still do fairly fast but you are not stressed you are present in the doing and you do as practice that as much as possible being totally present in every moment if you notice you can't do that anymore the world is imposing totally unrealistic deadlines on you there you have to take a stand and say I'm not going to participate in

this madness I will do what I can but I won't do that I'm not going to drive myself mad so you bring in sanity as much as you can into the structure of your work life but you yourself have to find out just how mad the structure of your work life is some structures can be transformed from within by people who awaken and bring in a new energy into the work environment other structures are from the outset already so insane the very structure and the people who are running it are so unconscious that in some cases the best thing is to walk out so you have to experiment with to what extent you can be present and bring a new energy into what you do so that you don't do it with stress nevertheless not losing the ability to act fast but fast without stress hurry, slowly hurry, slowly practice, try running after a bus or tram and feel the movement of your body breathing it's wonderful you may catch it or you may not you're not stressed if you're projecting yourself into the tram or the bus then you're stressed because you want to be there but you're here but if you can be present with every step it's fine and if you miss the bus it doesn't matter at least you feel alive so you have to see to some extent you can be present and still do fast but there may come a point where this isn't possible anymore when the world gets too mad around you and there you have to say that's it

[Speaker 6] (8:16:48 - 8:16:49)

thank you

[Speaker 5] (8:16:51 - 8:17:25)

since my consciousness is rising I feel so much more happiness but now comes the question sometimes it's rapidly decreasing when I you just had the example of the flower who grows and dies does people, humanity have the same purpose as the flower?

[Speaker 1] (8:17:26 - 8:17:27)

yes

[Speaker 5] (8:17:33 - 8:17:44)

then when I compare the flower to myself for example I feel this sadness coming up

[Speaker 1] (8:17:44 - 8:18:20)

ah, but you are flowering too maybe your mind doesn't know that your mind the mind doesn't understand awakening and there are people who are awakening you may be one of them who don't even know it because their mind keeps telling them that nothing much is changing the mind doesn't recognize presence the mind cannot recognize space and space is not memorable there is already more happiness in your life as you are awakening as you are more present is that correct?

[Speaker 4] (8:18:22 - 8:18:22)

correct

[Speaker 1] (8:18:23 - 8:18:55)

now that happiness is the flowering you call it happiness one can call it many things there is already the flowering beginning in your life it is the flowering of consciousness and next time you look at a flower look at a flower for a little while without naming it and then close your eyes and feel the beauty here because it is here where you responded to it

[Speaker 5] (8:18:57 - 8:19:02)

so except to be and to be the beauty there is no purpose in my life?

[Speaker 1] (8:19:03 - 8:24:55)

you don't need to the purpose is to wake up out of thinking the purpose is the arising of consciousness in which thinking plays a relatively unimportant part now that is the purpose so the purpose lies not in thinking which means you cannot construct a satisfactory construct through thought that explains to you your purpose because the very purpose is to go beyond thinking so it is not through thinking that you can understand what the purpose is the last thing you can do through thinking is you can point to you that says your true purpose is not to be trapped in thinking anymore ah thank you that's the end of the question is that right? thank you thank you good evening Mr. Toller I don't know if it's an essential question but we saw tonight it's important it's difficult to transcend the thinking the ego the personality what I wonder already a long time is why did we develop the ego in the first place and why is it so important for humanity to transcend that ego?

thank you a brief answer the why questions are also a little bit also the mind wants to explore a bit more and understand the important thing of course is to awaken to recognize one's own state of identification with thinking to recognize how unhappiness and suffering arises out of that state and then go beyond it so you can go beyond that state without understanding why and how the ego arose however we can talk about it I will make it very brief it all started with the apple when that happened which is a mythical tale of what happened to humanity when that happened the apple came from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the knowledge of good and evil is the good and bad is the ability to differentiate and choose this is good this is bad and it led to these first humans becoming aware of having a self image they became aware of themselves as if from the outside they suddenly realized they were naked but the main thing is the knowledge of good and evil is the arising of the ability to think which was a wonderful thing on the one hand but on the other hand gradually as this ability grew and grew and grew they lost their original state of connectedness with being with God with life I don't use God very often with being with the source of life to feel their

connectedness with the source that was paradise there were no problems no violence because they lived in that connectedness thinking arose it took thousands of years before humans became completely lost in thinking and then derived they lost their connectedness with being unaware of who they were beyond form totally identified with form thought form and that's the state of the ego on the other hand humans developed through the ego also they developed the ability to change the world through thought to become the most powerful being on the planet it was an evolutionary stage the egoic stage for many thousands of years we are now at the very end of that evolutionary stage and already at the beginning of a completely new evolutionary stage and because we are at the very end of this evolutionary stage it gets more and more dysfunctional because it's the end of a stage it's been dysfunctional for a long time but the further back you go the more this don't want to go into that too much but it was a stage all we need to know it was a stage in the evolution it must have had its place otherwise it wouldn't be there it had its place but we need to recognize it's insanity now and we need to recognize that the world that we have created a reflection of which you can see if you read a history book 20th century the most mad of all probably in terms of suffering inflicted by humans and other humans see the madness of it and then see the root of it in yourself nothing personal and then go beyond it now see the madness go beyond the why is a secondary thing it's interesting for the mind to have a little bit of understanding but even if you understood the why it wouldn't take you out the out takes only your attention to now your inner state now thank you

[Speaker 4] (8:25:00 - 8:25:10)

I had a question about the energy systems it's like my body is on fire when I breathe it lights up from

[Speaker 1] (8:25:10 - 8:26:34)

head to toe and when I breathe I can feel every chakra in my body stabilizing it's like I'm just on fire when does that happen?

I had a dream a couple of months ago when light was poured into my body my second body from then on thank you some people experience enormous energy movements in various forms in their body these are temporary they can sometimes accompany the shift in consciousness and the important thing is again what I said to the earlier questioner it is a temporary appearance of energy movement it is not it, it's a phenomenon that accompanies in some cases an awakening so you need to be the space for it, allow it without attaching an excessive importance to it then quickly it will pass through and will become transformed so just be with it, allow it and wait for it to pass because it has a certain function it will burn up certain things in you and then it will pass

[Speaker 4] (8:26:35 - 8:26:36)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (8:26:38 - 8:26:40)

perhaps one more question

[Speaker 4] (8:26:40 - 8:26:51)

good evening, my question to you is if you become more enlightened and you go into the flow of that energy how do you stay grounded in our mad world

[Speaker 1] (8:26:51 - 8:26:54)

can you read again so if you become

[Speaker 4] (8:26:54 - 8:27:02)

more enlightened and you go into the flow of that energy how do you stay grounded in our mad world

[Speaker 1] (8:27:02 - 8:27:04)

how do you stay grounded

[Speaker 4] (8:27:04 - 8:27:08)

grounded in a mad world

[Speaker 1] (8:27:08 - 8:27:09)

oh yes

[Speaker 4] (8:27:16 - 8:27:28)

because for me it's confusion if I feel some kind of enlightenment and then I see the sad mad world then I will disconnect because

[Speaker 1] (8:27:28 - 8:30:58)

ok thank you it certainly is a challenge to live in this world and if you are awakening then you see the madness more and more clearly the temptation is to react to the madness and that means you lose the space and the mind comes back the mind then interprets and says I can't live here anymore it judges the world the key is to remain in this mad world to remain there as the space for the mad world now the mad world is an abstract concept the reality of what you call the mad world is whatever form this so called mad world takes in this moment in front of you so in this moment you may be going from here to there you may be with one or two people or more people in a room you may be in a situation in a car in wherever but there is always only the simplicity of this moment

so you can't figure out how am I going to deal with this mad world instead of mad world just deal with the present moment as it appears in front of you in the form of a situation or in the form of a person that's all there ever is and that person or that situation may have some elements of insanity it's not unusual in this world so you still encounter many people that the mind would call irritating or completely mad and yet you have to be the space in this moment you have to be the space of this moment because you are that already you are the space for the madness not the entire world that's too much just as it appears in front of you at this moment then if you react you become part of it every reaction to the mad world and rejecting it you become part of it there needs to be an acceptance you recognize it as mad but you allow this moment and this person to be as he or she is at this moment without reacting then you don't reinforce the madness being the space for it so you can't do anything about the mad world but you can give fullest attention to whatever appears in front of you at this moment no matter what form it takes can I be the space for that yes not for the mad world you can't be the space for that because the mad world is only a mental abstraction whatever form the so called mad world takes is in the simplicity of the present moment and there you are the bringer of sanity by being the space for whatever appears last question

[Speaker 2] (8:31:03 - 8:31:08)

Mr. Thaler I find it very difficult to

[Speaker 5] (8:31:09 - 8:31:19)

combine learning, studying actively thinking with no thinking being present it's very much a dilemma for me

[Speaker 1] (8:31:19 - 8:31:28)

yes, thank you do you like what you are learning and studying or are you doing it just because it's part of getting a job

[Speaker 2] (8:31:28 - 8:31:31)

no I do it because I like it

[Speaker 1] (8:31:31 - 8:31:55)

you like it periodically move your mind away from let's say you have books or do you study with books or computer screens

[Speaker 2] (8:31:55 - 8:32:02)

well I'm doing literary research and also writing so it's combined

[Speaker 1] (8:32:02 - 8:35:27)

literary research I did that once now I have to admit here that I gave it up that does not mean that you should give it up and especially if you like it you are not just doing it to get a PhD or to get a job with your PhD or whatever it is, you actually enjoy so if there is an element of enjoyment while you do it then you can actually feel the enjoyment in the background that helps a little and periodically move away from the concepts and just get in touch with take a few conscious breaths in between your work feel the inner body the aliveness inside the body close your eyes feel the inner body look out of the window focus on sense perceptions, especially nature and just look without naming all these things are to do with stepping out of the mind bringing your attention to your breath bringing your attention into the body or bringing your attention to sense perceptions also to counteract an excessive amount of conceptual work, meditation may help so you may want to introduce meditation period into your life where you practice being free of thinking as much as possible but the main meditation of course in this teaching is everyday life and use the conditions of everyday life when you travel bicycle, bus whatever it may be, car again there are great opportunities for being in space awareness rather than thinking don't think about your work when you don't want to think don't let it run your life don't think about your project research project continuously you will actually have more insightful ideas if you have periods of not thinking not focusing on that then you get your PhD if that's what it is will be more original because all original thought comes out of a moment of thoughtlessness without moments of thoughtlessness no original thought so the great and every original thought has a flavor has a power because it comes out of that place so balance, bring more balance in also through some activity perhaps going out into nature nature is a great help to balance the excessive mind activity always stay in touch with nature an animal may help too

[Speaker 3] (8:35:27 - 8:35:29)

I have lots of animals

[Speaker 1] (8:35:30 - 8:36:06)

wonderful to have a dog or a cat they are not thinking they just look at you and you can relate them they are joyful just so just use little things to step out of that carry on if possible otherwise give it up if ever unhappiness arises around it then it's time to step out thank you applause music

[Speaker 4] (8:37:04 - 8:37:08)

music music

[Speaker 6] (8:37:15 - 8:37:18)

music music

[Speaker 3] (8:37:25 - 8:38:13)

music music music music music music music music music music music music music music ♪
One day more ♪

[Speaker 1] (8:40:29 - 8:45:15)

Welcome to our meditative evening. Also for some of you watching elsewhere, it may not be an evening. It may be morning or afternoon, but whatever it is, one thing we can be sure of, it's the present moment, all there ever is.

And as we sit here, I'd like to suggest, first of all, that you make sure that you're still breathing. That's a little step. Am I still breathing?

Just a second, let me check. Yes. In that moment, when you check whether you're breathing, your attention moves away from thinking and begins to move into the body.

Of course you're breathing, otherwise you would have collapsed. But mostly, of course, breathing is unconscious. So to...

A very easy step of getting out of being trapped in the continuous mental noise that we call thinking, being trapped in there and being dragged along by every thought that arises, stepping out, moving your attention voluntarily, not because life has just given you a hard knock. That is another way of getting out of the mind. But simply, okay, am I still breathing?

And in that moment, attention moves away from thinking. There's a tiny gap because in the moment of checking whether you're breathing, you're not thinking. If you're thinking at that moment, you still don't know whether you're breathing or not.

So it's only if you stop thinking, it might only be a second or two. And so, thousands of years ago already, some people discovered that and then they made it into a meditation. Brice Awareness Meditation, Anapanasati, et cetera, et cetera.

But it starts with, let me see if I'm still breathing. That's the mini meditation. Anything, when you step out of the noise of thinking, that's meditation.

And it is also a different state of consciousness that arises. So let's do it again. Am I still breathing?

Yes. And then perhaps you feel a certain aliveness because you've put some attention into the body. You feel a certain aliveness within.

Hard to describe because it has no shape as such. Somehow you know that you are alive. That's another way of taking attention away from thinking.

And so these things become an anchor for being present. Present, your attention in the now.

